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America in the Middle East

Marian A. Pearl

An Unfinished Letter

Ernst Zander

Kassem : Iraq's Would-Be Nasser

Paul Ecker

The Cantos of Ezra Pound

Francis Russell

Material and Documents :
Against French Nuclear Tests

Correspondence :

Letter from Japan

Kazuo Suzuki

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Marian A. Pearl.

AMERICA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

When the United States landed troops in Lebanon in 1958 it revealed its true attitude toward the social aspirations of the Arab people. Joined in this repressive action by its erstwhile competitor, Great Britain, the United States backed its policy with a dramatic show of armed force, a method of persuasion hitherto reserved for its Central American backyard. To head off any public opposition at home by concealing the coercive aspect of the troop landing, the American press started a propaganda avalanche which completely ignored the legitimate anti-colonialist aspirations of an aroused mass movement in the Arab world. Instead the press cited the "Russian threat" in a new guise—"indirect aggression"—as the cause for unrest in the Middle East. This slander of "Communist instigation", used freely against every positive social and national movement of the day, was parroted by such "anti-war" liberals as Senator Hubert Humphrey and Adlai Stevenson, who are always blowing their horns about disarmament in the abstract but who avoid any criticism of a concrete instance of armed action for reactionary purposes. By furthering the propaganda hoax they and other liberals joined their reactionary brothers in duping the public, rendering it leaderless and apathetic. To prevent a similar situation during future repressive actions in the Middle East and in other unstable areas, politically aware people must understand the true relationships among the big powers and between these powers and the mass of the people.

The Russian "Threat"

The United States stands supreme over the Middle East despite Russia's shuffling on the outskirts. Present-day Russian influence actually was facilitated by American policies—which also hold it within strict bounds. This is abundantly clear in the United Arab Republic where the large Russian assistance program, initiated after America withdrew its own aid offers at a critical moment, has not broken Washington's hold on Nasser. Russia has been allowed to economically penetrate the one major Middle Eastern area without commercial oil prospects and one which, in its Egyptian sector, presents an almost hopeless social perspective within the present framework.¹ By refusing to arm the Arabs in 1955 and not underwriting the Aswan dam project *even during the current open rapprochement*, the

¹ The vast oil wealth of Iraq makes it highly improbable that Britain and the United States will allow the Stalinists to gain permanent power in Iraq. For details on the situation in Iraq see Paul Ecker's article, "Kassem, Iraq's Would-Be Nasser".

United States has unmistakably opened the Middle East to Russia. Moscow took its cue and pushed in—making plausible the politically useful charge of Russian penetration in the area.

Oil is not Russia's main concern in the Middle East. Harrison Salisbury of the *N.Y. Times* has pointed out that Russia has yet to enter the oil-consuming automotive age or develop a petro-chemical industry. Therefore, the drive for oil does not assume critical proportions for Russia. In fact, Russia today *exports* crude oil, since it extracts more crude from the vast pool around the Caspian Sea than it has the capacity to refine. Under these circumstances, Russia is not likely to press seriously against American interests in the Middle East.

At present Russian interest in the Middle East consists in trade. The forces inside Russia that have compelled a loosening of the terror since the death of Stalin have also pressed for an outward movement of the Russian economy. After a generation of despair, the Russian masses are raising their voices, demanding expansion of consumer goods production. Russian manager-capitalists, creatures of an industrial empire built under totalitarianism, are now straining for some freedom from its strictures. Given the overwhelming political dominance and economic capacity of the West, Russia, as a newcomer to the world market, must accept any crumbs that fall from the table, even trade with Syria-Egypt.

To gain a proper perspective on the relative strength of the United States and Russia as creditors in the Middle East one must appreciate the fact that Russian aid to the United Arab Republic for the four years since 1955 constitutes 43% of the total Soviet-bloc economic aid extended during this period. The credits extended total \$925,000,000 of which only \$330,000,000 have been drawn, \$200,000,000 by Egypt and \$130,000,000 by Syria. ('Lloyd's Bank Review', as quoted in the *New York Times*, 22nd February, 1959). During these same four years, despite its supposed chastisement of Nasser, the United States pumped into Egypt \$112,000,000 (\$55,000,000 in grants and \$57,000,000 in credits). In one year alone, 1958, America's darling, Turkey, received \$359,000,000 in grants and loans from the United States and American-controlled international lending agencies—\$29,000,000 more than the U.A.R. received from Russia in the entire four years!

Washington Versus London in the Oil War.

The serious economic competitors in the Middle East are the United States and Great Britain. At the moment the focal point of the competition is Iraq. Recently, the controversy over British arms for Kassem brought some enlightening admissions in the press. On 17th May, 1959, the *N.Y. Times* noted that, "despite State Department misgivings, London has now agreed to sell arms to the Iraqi government, which only a few weeks ago suppressed an uprising that was supported by President Nasser, if he did not instigate it . . ." [my emphasis—M.P.] On the same day it revealed the reasons for the British action:

The British are gambling for the preservation of their remaining stake in the Middle East. . . . The British had to take this chance because their stake in the area was the difference between Britain as a first-class power with a reasonable chance to remain solvent, and Britain as a second- or third-class power doomed to dependence on North America and the Commonwealth to make up her deficits. If Iraq alone were involved, that would be important to Britain. The Iraq Petroleum Co. will probably earn something approaching \$280,000,000 this year, half of which will be company profit. And of the company profit about two-thirds will find its way to London banks. But beyond Iraq there is a big British stake in the oil consortium of Iran and overshadowing all else, an enormous British stake in Kuwait and other parts of the Persian Gulf.

Benjamin Shwadran sums up the results of 40 years of competition for oil between America and Britain:

Although arguing in the name of abstract general principles, the Americans have been determined not to let the British outsmart them. The victories of the United States—some of them due to stubborn persistence and some to oversight or ineptness of the British—are impressive indeed. American companies have obtained a quarter share in Iraq Petroleum Company, the entire concessions of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, one half of the concession in Kuwait and recently a 40% share in Iranian oil. They have also built many refineries and the largest pipeline—from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean.

(*Middle East Oil and the Great Powers.*)

Why should the British, who fought successfully to keep American companies out of Iran and in a minor position in Iraq prior to World War II, suddenly become "inept"? This mystery, as well as the reason for the success of Washington's "stubborn persistence" is explained by the material position of the contenders during and after the war. When Britain had her back to the wall during the war the United States grabbed complete control of the Saudi Arabian fields, breaking Britain's near-monopoly in Middle Eastern oil. This development was only a precursor of coming defeats. In 1946, the British still controlled half the entire interest in Middle Eastern oil compared to 35.3% for American companies. However, by 1955, after the Iranian dispute resulted in a consortium giving American companies a 40% share in a formerly all-British concern, the American share in Middle Eastern oil jumped to 58.4% while Britain's dropped to 35.9%. The loss of Iran and the markets supplied by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company decisively turned the tide in favour of the United States.²

In terms of world oil production, Britain's position is devastatingly inferior. In 1958, only 14.5% of world oil production was owned by British concerns. This compares with 63.9% produced by American-owned companies. The rest came from Russia and Iran. The latter now has the honor of being titular owner of its oil, while the consortium makes the decisions and reaps most of the profits.

² This was clearly analyzed by Andrew Maxwell in his article on the Iranian crisis, "Persian Oil: America Defeats Britain", in *Contemporary Issues*, Number 11, Summer, 1952.

Aggravating the effects of Britain's decline in the Middle East, is an historic shift away from coal power and toward dependence on oil that is occurring in the British economy. In 1948, oil furnished only 7.7% of the country's total energy requirements, compared with 55% supplied by coal. By 1958, oil had risen to 13.4%, while coal had dropped to 43.5%. In the British petro-chemical industry, producing fertilizers, solvents and plastics, total investment expanded rapidly from £44 million at the end of 1955 to an anticipated 100 million at the end of 1959. The industry is now second only to American petro-chemicals. In apparent distrust of their American partners, the British spent £200 million between 1947 and 1954 to build oil refineries on British soil. Before the war, 75% of Britain's oil was refined overseas since it is more economical to ship refined oil than crude. Today strategic control takes precedence over old-fashioned economy and only 28% of Britain's oil is refined overseas.

Oil and the European Economies

In the international oil war, the State Department has been a potent ally of the American oil companies, beginning in the 1920's when its pressure broke European control of Iraqi oil. Middle Eastern possessions have enabled the American oil monopolies to reap gigantic profits by pegging the price of Middle Eastern oil, costing pennies per barrel to produce, to high-priced American oil, often costing ten times as much. As a result, Europe and other oil-consuming nations, including the oil countries themselves (the price of gasoline in Teheran is approximately 40c. per gallon) are bled by an extra 400 million dollars annually. (*New Statesman and Nation*, 26th February, 1955.)

However, it was not merely to insure Standard Oil's super-profits that the State Department participated in a long series of secret maneuvers, plots and counter-plots, accompanied by economic and political coercion. Control of Middle Eastern oil, supplying 80% of Europe's petroleum requirements at present, is a strategic height from which the United States attempts to manipulate and limit Europe's economy. It is a reflection of America's preponderance in the world economic arena and the comparative weakness of European capitalism after the war that an area supplying such a vital resource could be seized without a major clash. The Suez invasion was only a final desperate gesture to remedy a hopeless situation. Since Britain and France were brought to their knees by American control of their oil they must think twice before embarking on a course that challenges American interests anywhere in the world.

One of the secret deals through which Washington's oil policy influenced the course of the European economy was brought to light in 1958 when Enrico Mattei, head of the Italian State Oil Trust, charged that direct American pressure on the Libyan government caused cancellation of Italian oil concessions in Libya. The American reaction was a torrent of denunciation against Mattei, Premier Fanfani

and his faction of the Christian Democratic party.³ C. L. Sutzberger revealed the reason for America's hot concern: "... Mattei, who is eager to gain petroleum rights anywhere [this peasant doesn't know his place!—M.P.] thinks a neutral policy will facilitate deals with the Arab world." (*N.Y. Times*, 26th November, 1958.) Soon after this incident, the Fanfani government fell. The role played by the American Embassy in this development can be inferred by public revelations of the interference of United States Ambassador Clare Booth Luce in Italian politics. Mrs. Luce sought "... to block [President Gronchi's] election as Chief of State [because] ... Gronchi, no Communist sympathizer, is nevertheless known for Left-Wing and neutralist leanings." (*New York Times*, 24th November, 1958.)

Aside from minor concessions held by the Italians and Japanese in the Persian Gulf, the United States has prevented entrance of these oil-thirsty smaller nations into the magic circle. Nevertheless, revived competition from these countries, which are offering a 75-25 oil royalty ratio compared to the 50-50 ratio now in effect, is an unsettling factor that hampers America's efforts to stabilize the oil picture in the Middle East.

Where the United States is unable to prevent a European oil venture, it moves to control it from within. This is occurring in the newest major oil field, the Sahara, conservatively estimated by the French to contain 700 million tons of crude oil coupled with enormous quantities of natural gas. Sahara oil is expected to reach France and the Common Market in significant quantities by 1961. In return for a 50% share in *new* prospecting territory given to Standard Oil of New Jersey as well as concessions to other American companies, among them, City Services, France received a \$200,000,000 American loan which paved the way for devaluation of the franc, increasing its convertibility, and bolstering the French economy generally. By mortgaging the last great oil pool under total European control, De Gaulle bought a temporary measure of viability for French economy. Nevertheless, to the extent that North African oil lessens dependence on the American-controlled Middle East, the European oil position is strengthened.

Naturally, the "Sahara Petroleum Code", provides that the sale price of Sahara oil must be the going price of the international market, unilaterally determined by the price of a barrel of oil in Texas, by far the most expensive in the world. In this way, the monopolists

³ Here is a lesson in "objective reporting" taken from a *news* item in the *N.Y. Times* (26th November, 1958). It reports on Fanfani's ousting of pro-Americans from the Italian Foreign Office following the Mattei disclosures. "That secret society of East Africa's Kikuyu tribe, Mau Mau, was renowned during its heyday for sudden, swift assaults with a brush-whacking cleaver called the panga. Much quiet knife work is being done here [Rome] today by Italy's Mau Mau, a clique within the ruling Christian Democratic party so-called because its leaders' names begin with the letter M. The Mau Maus are in fact the panga-men of Amintore Fanfani, Premier, Foreign Minister and boss of the Christian Democrats' left wing. The principal leader of these panga-men is Girolamo Messeri, a Sicilian, who represents in the Senate the home town of the famous bandit, [!] Guiliano."

prevent any dip in the price of their product regardless of the low costs of production.⁴

Restricting Oil Production

Despite Eisenhower's bleating about the dangers of inflation, the American government works hand in hand with the giant oil monopolies to maintain the artificially high price of oil. By imposing mandatory oil import quotas in March, 1959, Eisenhower prevented the decline of American oil prices in the face of an international oil surplus. This action automatically restricted production abroad by closing part of the important American market. Having no markets in Europe, the smaller independent American oil producers were discouraged from taking newly released concessions in the Middle East when the import restrictions were announced. This crass monopolistic maneuver is accompanied by solemnly intoned "reasons" stressing the importance of keeping the domestic oil industry in good shape for "national defense". At the same time, American oil production is held at a minimum; the wells in Texas have only been allowed to produce at their rated capacity nine days out of each month.

While the oil monopolies strive to limit production and keep prices high, the struggle for competitive advantage drives the nations on in an endless search for new oil. In 1958 alone, 10 billion barrels of crude oil were added to already known reserves. In this situation the delicate balance between limited production and high prices is assiduously guarded by the United States and the American oil companies which have the most to lose if the oil glut should get out of hand and force prices down.

America Defeats Britain in Suez

The Suez crisis resulted from the convergence of British-American rivalries and Egyptian nationalism. Beginning with the evacuation of the 80,000-man British garrison at Suez, the United States played a key role in resolving the crisis against European interests. This is the explanation for America's reputation for "anti-colonialism" in the Middle East. What becomes clear from an examination of the crisis is that Nasser's anti-British maneuvering acquired boldness as it acquired American support. Former Egyptian president Naguib gives a concrete instance of American diplomatic support for Egypt during the negotiations on the future of the Suez garrison:

At the Washington Conference in the summer of 1953, the British exacted a promise from the Americans to extend no military or economic assistance to Egypt until the Suez negotiations [on the status of the British garrison] had been completed. At the Washington Conference of 1954 . . . they [the British] were told that

⁴ For details see "Free Algeria", February, 1959, *Newsletter of the Algerian Front of National Liberation*, New York.

the United States was not prepared to wait indefinitely, that Britain must either come to terms with Egypt or the United States would do so separately. Sir Winston Churchill, in spite of his age, proved once again that he was big enough to accept the inevitable [something Anthony Eden learned the hard way after the Suez landing fiasco—M.P.]. Orders were given to resume the negotiations, this time in earnest, and within a month both parties had initialed a draft agreement. . . .

(*Egypt's Destiny*, New York, 1955)

In addition to encouragement at the conference table, the United States kept Egypt financially solvent with \$26,000,000 in aid *during the period of negotiations* with Britain. Yet, one month after the last British soldier left Suez on 13th June, 1956, the State Department sent its sudden cable breaking off talks on financing the Aswan Dam while officials of the World Bank were still conferring on terms. As Dulles well knew it would, "his withdrawal of the offer to finance the Aswan Dam had precipitated Nasser's seizure of the Canal . . ." writes British international expert E. E. Hudson (*Middle East in Transition*, ed. Walter Z. Laqueur, 1958).

There were numerous indications that Nasser had been preparing to nationalize the Suez Canal and needed only the "occasion" provided by Dulles. As early as October, 1954, Nasser set up a commission to study problems concerning the operation of the canal. In 1955, the Egyptian embassy sounded out the *United States* government about the possibilities of hiring American pilots to operate ships passing through the canal. As Marquis Childs summed it up in the *N.Y. Post*: "Whatever the motive, the way in which the offer [to finance the Aswan Dam] was pulled back seemed deliberately designed to send Nasser off on some new adventure." One week after the rupture of the Aswan negotiations, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal.

In the wake of nationalization, the United States and the European nations participated in a series of conferences in London ostensibly aimed at removing the canal from Egyptian control. Again America's role seemed calculated to encourage Egyptian stubbornness in the face of an enraged Britain and France. Hudson, in the book quoted above, comments on Dulles' position at the London conference:

But from the beginning there were strange vacillations and reservations in the attitude of the American Secretary of State, as if he were being jerked away by some invisible force from cooperation with his European colleagues . . . Dulles . . . began to deprecate any talk of exerting even economic pressure on Egypt. Finally he refused to agree to the withholding of dues from Egypt by the Canal Users' Association, which the British and American governments had understood was to be a means of bargaining for the attainment of the purposes laid down at the London Conference. The Dulles *volte face* led to a complete breakdown of confidence between Washington and London."

The United States made certain that the Egyptian government had money in its pocket by paying tolls directly to Nasser although the Europeans insisted on paying the old Canal Company. The United

States froze Egyptian assets in the United States on 3rd August. However, this applied only to existing government funds; later accruals and private holdings were exempted.

As American policy helped assure Egyptian control of the Canal, Britain and France, with the aid of Israel, began their desperate efforts to regain the Canal by force.⁵ Maneuvers at the United Nations during the resulting crisis constituted the public show behind which economic pressures resulting from the embargo of Middle East oil, coupled with opposition by the British people, compelled the Anglo-French withdrawal from Suez. The embargo was illustrative of Washington's use of American-controlled Middle Eastern oil as a club to force its policy through. At the end of the affair, Nasser had secured Egyptian control of the Canal while Britain, sans Canal, was in debt to the International Monetary Fund for \$1.3 billion spent on supplies and dollar oil. A final settlement in March, 1959, saw Britain waive all claims to an estimated \$144,000,000 worth of installations and military equipment at its former Suez base and release an equal amount of blocked sterling balances. France gave Egypt approximately \$58,000,000 for invasion damages. Meanwhile, the Canal is earning \$100,000,000 in foreign currency per year for Egypt and the United States is providing additional funds to keep the Nasser regime in power. American interests, operating through Nasser, once more have defeated those of Britain in the Middle East.

Washington and Arab Nationalism

In utilizing the forces generated by mass discontent for its own purposes, the United States has taken a leaf out of Russia's book. Both in Iran and Egypt, the people's yearning to overcome their bottomless poverty achieved expression in the nationalist movement and provided the motor force that lifted the British from their dominant positions. However, after encouraging Arab nationalism's official spokesman, Nasser, against its imperialist rival, the United States saw the nationalist movement reach proportions that threatened to defy containment. By 1958, the nationalist contagion had spread to every important country in the Middle East, arousing the people, shaking impotent regimes and their archaic feudal structures and finally reaching its climax in Iraq on the night of 14th July. Washington's answer to a situation that threatened to shake the social structure of the Middle East rendering it chaotic and unmanageable, was swift and sure.

The Lebanese landing signaled an end to Arab illusions, fostered during the Suez crisis, that the United States would permit Nasser

⁵ The Suez invasion pointed up the reactionary role that Israel assumes as an ally of imperialism in the Middle East. Where the "communist threat" was too ludicrous, "defense" of Israel became the pretext for invading Egypt. The symbiotic relationship between the Israeli government and the imperialists operates to keep their common enemy, the Arab people, divided, weak and misled. Every victory of the Arab people over their Western masters narrows the maneuvering space for Israel.

and the Arab middle class more than limited power over their own affairs. With the landing the United States served notice that social upheavals in "oil monarchies" could expect the same "democratic" intervention as in "banana republics". Although indicating the profound limitations placed on imperialist armed actions by the antipathy of the American people toward foreign wars, the withdrawal of United States forces a few months later did not cancel the important gains won by the landing.

Using direct armed force, Dulles checked nationalist demands for more independence ("neutralism") a greater share in the oil wealth, and the gravitation toward a Mediterranean trade bloc. For a few decisive months, the nationalist tide which had been rising simultaneously in all Arab countries, was dammed up, allowing time-honoured methods of diplomatic and economic pressure to fragment the struggle, bring faltering regimes into line and to discourage the people. As a result, Saud still sits on his throne in Arabia and runs errands for Aramco. Hussein has throttled the opposition in Jordan, and Lebanon is relatively quiet. Iran has accepted an American military base on its soil as the price for further American aid. Any popular social potential resulting from the revolt in Iraq is blocked by the danger of armed intervention by the big powers. Nasser, put back in his place after growing too big for his boots, has been forced to relinquish Pan-Arabic visions although Syria is still chafing under his rule. "A year ago the possible limits on Nasserism seemed uncertain, anything seemed possible. But today events [in particular, the Lebanese landing—M.P.] seemed to have placed physical limits on the movement . . ." (*New York Times*, 22nd February, 1959.) The people of the Middle East have come up against another blank wall in their periodic efforts to climb out of the perspectiveless pit that imprisons them.

Nasser is receiving his reward for submitting to America's reprimand and for throwing cold water on the nationalist movement. He is being provided with the material prerequisites for his continued rule. Wheat shipments on favorable terms, resumption of economic and technical aid, use of American dredging equipment for improving the Suez Canal and a contemplated \$250,000,000 loan for widening it, were not dispensed by the United States without important political concessions. Part of the bargain apparently was the decidedly unprovocative role Nasser played at the Cairo oil conference in April, 1959. What had been heralded a year before as a united Arab front for a greater percentage of oil profits, for a share in the transport and marketing profits of the oil companies and for a Middle East development fund fizzled into nothing. So subdued was the atmosphere that an American lawyer who delivered a paper on the legal precedents for nationalizing oil industries proved to be an embarrassment to the Middle East potentates! The only reason the United States is not completely open in its embrace of Nasser is its fear that, "any overt expression of United States support for President Nasser, it is felt here [Washington] would hurt him as a popular leader." (*New York Times*, 31st March, 1959.) Objectively, Nasser

is playing an important role for the United States by diverting Arab nationalism from social issues, channelizing it into sterile, formal Pan-Arabism and leaving the movement in the lurch when it goes beyond America's interests.

Within Egypt, Nasser has been able to control the people, with America's help, by sitting on the lid of discontent rather than by tackling the causes of social misery. By creating model villages (later abandoned amidst corruption scandals), initiating the giant Aswan Dam (at *this* point, a dubious project to cost an astronomical \$682,000,000, sinking the country into debt without immediate gain for the populace) and by seizing the Canal, Nasser has given the impression that he is doing something about the poverty of the Egyptian people. On such basic questions as spurring *light* industry (which alone makes sense for Egypt), diversification of agriculture to lessen dependence on cotton, and above all, land division, little has been accomplished in the last seven years. These are concrete programs which can generate an economic momentum of their own almost immediately, absorbing the unemployed and lifting living standards. However, for Nasser, a \$250,000,000 loan for improving the Canal used by the big powers comes before improving the lot of the miserable fellahin. Another "necessity" has been the phenomenal growth of the government bureaucracy to absorb the graduates of Egyptian schools. In a stagnant economy this is the way the government provides jobs for the intellectuals and keeps them from thorough disillusionment. Another "absolute necessity" is sabers to rattle for which \$331,000,000 in armaments (approximately 18% of the total budget) has been appropriated for 1960.

A much-heralded land reform law has been applied but yielded only 620,000 acres for redistribution out of 6,000,000 acres of cultivable land in Egypt. Most of this land, including the estates of former King Farouk, has been distributed to peasants owning five to fifty acres, leaving the landless almost untouched. There are no plans for further land division. That the present law was a concession to the popular feeling that swept out Farouk and that only a further expression of this feeling will move the government to further land division was evidenced by the words of Sayyid Mari, leading administrator of the reform, to a group of landowners:

We all remember the days preceding the revolution of July, 1952; we remember how the Egyptian village became restless as a result of dangerous agitation; we remember the events which led to bloodshed and destruction of property—for the first time in the history of the Egyptian village. Would the large landowners have preferred to be left exposed to the wind blowing through this unrest, exploiting want and poverty, until it became a tempest uprooting everything . . . and endangering perhaps the peace of our entire fatherland?

(As quoted by Gabriel Baer in *Middle East in Transition*)

The economic perspective that a thorough-going land reform can provide for Egypt as well as other poverty-ridden "over-populated" agricultural countries is presented by R. R. Flugel in his article, *Egypt: Reform at Home or Adventure Abroad*.

It is the long-range implications of agricultural rejuvenation which assume enormous significance in light of Egypt's acute problem of population pressure on the land. By increasing productivity of present acreage and extending the area of cultivation, the income and living standards of peasants effected thereby will rise commensurably. Through this gradual process of raising farm income of a predominantly rural population, the basis for a *substantial domestic market for Egyptian manufactured goods can be realistically and firmly established* [my emphasis—M.P.]. As industry in turn expands it should inevitably siphon off and productively employ much of the surplus farm labor and unemployed which now depresses already low wages and living standards; the expansion of the factory force should simultaneously boost consumer purchasing power. In time then industrial and agricultural production assiduously encouraged by the home government and with the invaluable assistance of outside capital may reasonably be expected to absorb future population growth.

Why doesn't the United States government use excess American production constructively to eliminate the poverty of the Middle East and other underdeveloped areas by industrializing them? America's rulers are driven by the objective needs of the profit system to maintain economic scarcity in the face of potential economic abundance and do not voluntarily move toward a painless solution of social problems. The United States government must be faced with the greater "evil" of open popular upheaval threatening the political and social stability of an area and hence *all* the profits extracted from it, before it will undermine the cheap labor supply and raw materials of American corporations abroad. In other words, it is only the restlessness of the colonial peoples that forces the big powers, which control the world's capital resources, to sponsor some industrial development. Nevertheless, the industrialization which takes place in the backward areas remains limited, one-sided, weak and easily controlled.

Within this framework, the main factors countering America's restrictive policies in the colonial world are the social demands and the political awakening of the people. The elemental struggle of the people for political freedom and an independent economic development counters the basic tendencies of American policy. In the sharpened conflict between the imperialists, who feel their entire system threatened, and the aroused colonial people, ever more repressive actions such as the Suez invasion and the Lebanese landing, ever more brutal wars such as the Algerian conflict are the price of empire and the daily bread of the earth's people.

This senseless and absolutely needless suffering continues despite the fact that the factories and productive capacity of the West, if released from the fetters of the profit motive, could swiftly eliminate mass poverty in the underdeveloped areas.

November, 1959.

Ernst Zander

AN UNFINISHED LETTER

7th October, 1956.

Dear Sidney,

This is, after my return home, the day to turn to your letter of 16th July. I have, however, a lot to say before I come to your letter proper—a lot about things in general and in particular. It goes therefore without saying that this letter is in reality an attempt to participate in the general and, it seems to me, fairly confused discussion. . . . I feel in my good right as a member of the family that I should, on the ground of certain experiences, no longer stay out of the discussion. For, strangely enough, the question of the "Plan" and the current discussion lead back to the same point as in the case of philosophy: our confusion in theoretical questions. Sometimes this confusion is so enormous and manifests itself so unexpectedly in matters of the utmost triviality and self-evidence that I'm simply baffled and no longer know what to think or to say. The first thing I can think in such cases is: If people would exercise themselves only a little and think before they speak, nay, would only listen carefully and register what has been said or, for that matter, read—affairs would stand much better and not only a lot of valueless talk and outright nonsense could be avoided, but also a lot of friction and very disturbing and unpleasant incidents. A friend of mine (whom I, besides, boundlessly esteem and admire for his perfect humaneness, naturalness, good-heartedness and fine sense) said these days when we spoke about the "boom" discussion and the fact that it had already led to sharpness: "If people would sit down and work on a problem, they would bring in the solution". Nothing can be more true, and it would be indeed the *real* solution for *all* difficulties. Alas, relatively few people can be "seduced" to work on themselves and to control themselves—the uneven development in education and self-education continues and always new efforts have to be made to heighten the *average* level.

An effort in that direction is the character of this letter which will be, therefore, a sort of a balance sheet. Note, please, that I'm speaking about matters which concern us all and which are by no means restricted to the discussion you have over there. Further: It should be understood that when I have to *state* certain things, I'm not complaining. Disgusted as I occasionally may be *vis-à-vis* quite avoidable stupidities (extremely unpleasant happenings)—I start from what is and shall try to advance with the subject in a strictly objective manner. For this same reason I shall not mention names where it is not required for reference, as in the documents or letters so far presented. In other words: I have not one iota of interest to go beyond matters of importance for our work as a whole; I have still less interest to be

"sharp" (and I mean always *personal* sharpness) or to "deal" with somebody. On the contrary, the first point I want to speak about is just the question of sharpness. I begin with an anecdote whose "essence" is so typical that it alone accounts for 80 to 90% of the existing confusion.

I spoke to another friend of mine (whom I value highly for a number of qualities, but not for his capacity to educate, to teach or to think organically) that I had learned about the sharpness which had entered into the discussion. To my surprise and yet not to my surprise I got the reaction: "I don't see why that should worry you!" There we were at level zero and I could have answered a great deal. For the moment, however, I said only as a general recommendation: "Keep your words soft and sweet—you may have to eat them." But what is the real problem in this case? The problem is that it is often forgotten for what we stand. Now, the first thing for which we stand is non-barbarism, i.e. for a *civilized discussion even with opponents*. I have, *with general acceptance and not one word of opposition*, so much written and explained and publicly declared on this point that I really feel a sort of "admiration" for the memory of anybody who can forget it even while asleep. Every time it was forgotten among ourselves I have reminded us that, whatever temperamental incidents or heat may occur in *oral* discussions, we were obliged to cool down when we have time to reflect and put what we have to say on cool paper. What we are for the outside, we must be inside—the last time I went over this theme was in reply to a letter from Andrew (I believe) who had gone out of his way in reply to letters from New York. As for the general line on which we march, I will quote what all have read and what my friend, by force of circumstances, has read several times *this year* in the May-June issue of *Contemporary Issues* ("The Campaign Against Remilitarization in Germany"):

"... we discuss fraternally and amicably with a 'Stalinist' such as, for example, Mrs. Rösler's sister (who has, in our opinion, only a false conception but has not participated in the crimes covered by this conception), but never with Mr. Pieck and his like. With such rabble one discourses only through the barbed wire behind which it hides. . . .

"Surely everybody shall be happy with his ideology as long as he does not try, in its name, to cheat other people and commits no crime. Everywhere where this is not the case, one can amicably discuss and explain why this and that conception, put into practice, is dangerous and leads to catastrophe."

I emphasize in all this the word *discussion* in order to separate it sharply from *attacks* on outspoken foes, swines, nuisances, cheaters, scoundrels or whatever you have. If we encounter the latter categories, everybody of us knows what to do and it would indeed be an error to treat them "delicately". My friend, however, who has, to tell the truth, a weak memory for essentials and a strong one for unessentials, and has therefore an outspoken talent for making "witty" remarks in the wrong places—my friend found it necessary to say

that those who had become "sharp" had "perhaps read *The Dog Behind the Stove*".¹ "Yes," I said, "perhaps," adding for myself: "Perhaps" in the same way as you, my dear friend, namely without understanding a word! And yet, the words of the "Anti-Cur" are clear and show (a) that I always insist on the above distinction, (b) never miss an opportunity to outline our line of conduct in every possible key. For example, you can read in the "Anti-Cur":

"Venom and gall, your Honour, are products of nature and play an indispensable role in the lives of certain organisms. There are poisons salutary and useful, narcotic and intoxicant (or stimulating), anodynes and, among others, also those which are applied as an antidote (for example, when we are bitten by a rabid cur). Furthermore, venom and gall can get the *upper hand* and evoke the most varied disturbances [and how varied these disturbances are!], even as the reverse, the underproduction of these substances, can lead to all sorts of complications. In both instances quite concrete measures are required, but the physician who would simply inveigh against venom and gall and demand the removal of all gall bladders—this physician would not be allowed to practise even by a society so degenerate in logic as the present . . . Furthermore, venom and gall can be used for murderous [!] aims . . . and for executioner's aims, while in quite specific instances the gall bladder must be removed [!]. It is necessary in each case, however, to give a clear diagnosis and decide properly which case is in question, for cries of horror alone are no proof of the emergence of a real horror."—"Of course, had the creature been innocent and the cur been treated with venom and gall wantonly [!], why that would have been another matter and would certainly have testified against the perpetrator."—"Furthermore: anger, hate, and the like, *can* be and are an objection when it is possible to *demonstrate* that they are venting themselves in *naked* abuse and do not produce any arguments. In that event, they present, with regard to form as well as content, nothing but hate and anger as such, in which case they become as inadequate and flat as—your 'argument'."

One has only to compare the quotation concerning Mrs. Rösler with that from the "Anti-Cur" in order to see how little my friend has understood what is at stake. It is therefore no wonder that I have many times prevented him from writing "sharp" letters, from "proceeding" in his unreflected way, from "dealing" with people and even from participation in discussions, when I was convinced that he would ruin these discussions. And I have always insisted and will always insist that we must *discuss*—at least on cool paper, at least on cool paper!—without heat and hate or, to use the words of the "Anti-Cur", without using venom and gall *wantonly* and for *murderous* aims where there *can be no justification*. Precisely *discussions* belong to the *specific instances* in which the gall bladder *must be removed*, and I'm ready to prove in each concrete case that it

¹ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 3, No. 9, 1951.

speaks *against the perpetrator* if this rule is violated. I spoke to another friend who has recently written a sharp piece against an article which appeared in *Contemporary Issues*. Asked why his reply to that article had to be "sharp", he gave a number of explanations which amounted to differences of opinion to which everybody is entitled and thus cannot justify sharpness: discuss what you have to discuss with a good friend who has not tried to cheat other people and has committed no crime as, for example, the Cur who operated in the dark and wanted to murder for the sake of murder. Explaining thus that I could not see why differences of opinions, wrong statements and the like were reasons to become "sharp", the last reason turned out to be a "pedagogical" one. The friend had already during the philosophic discussion told me that he was so "stubborn" on a certain point because he believed or had the impression or was sure (it doesn't matter) that certain friends were very enthusiastic about philosophy and agreed with me and acted as if they had understood, yet had in reality not. I answered that such phenomena were unavoidable and that he should not worry about them, especially since it was the same case in *all* questions. (The process of understanding is a long one and we must always proceed and wait until the failure in understanding shows up. We have such a case just in so simple a matter of (in theory) agreement as the question of sharpness, a question in which nobody showed any sign of non-understanding or opposition and in which understanding is lacking nevertheless.) Well, in the case of his "sharp" piece the friend feels again that certain friends agree with or accept what is said in the article without knowing the subject or understanding what is involved, and he wants to be sharp in order to shake them, or stir them up, or awaken them, or shock them (it doesn't matter). I could quote the "Anti-Cur" and say: Why must he "struggle against evils which cannot be avoided, and submit to others, which a tenth part of the trouble they create [!] him would remove from his heart for ever?" I must indeed repeat that non-understanding is *absolutely unavoidable* (especially when something "new" is presented) and that the only way to overcome it is elaboration and repetition, while unnecessary personal sharpness is *per definitionem* an avoidable evil to which to submit means to create a host of trouble. Since the friend of whom I speak is extremely honest and able to correct his judgement of people even if he personally dislikes them (for which I have proof), it would be an insult not to take his pedagogical intention seriously and to think that something "else" is behind it (the beloved method of fishing for personal "motives"). But just because I must take what he says seriously and speak about nothing other than the matter itself, I think that he himself does not understand what he is doing. For is it not a strange sort of pedagogy to beat somebody in order to make *others* aware that they were sleeping? Imagine that a pupil has written a thesis. He reads his thesis to the class and the teacher gets the impression that the class has not understood that the thesis was faulty or, contrary to its belief, has not grasped its meaning. Whereupon the teacher decides to make

the class "aware" of its non-understanding by boxing the ears of the pupil in question as often as possible, by calling him names, by insulting him and so on, all the while "explaining" to the poor victim of his pedagogical intentions that he committed that and that error. The class, if not composed of sheer brutes and complete idiots, will rightly think that the teacher would have done much better if he had given his explanations without all this noise—it will turn against him and, if it learns that the noise was introduced to make it "aware", will feel insulted by this kind of "awakening" which presupposes that the class is either too dull or too stupid to become aware in a normal way. It is one thing (and requires nothing but the establishment of the fact) to call a murder a murder, a swindler a swindler, a pig a pig—it is another thing to converse with honest or harmless people who have the same right to err as we ourselves. It is again one thing to give sharp *formulas* (and it involves no injustice against anybody) in order to *provoke* a discussion on a clear ground—it is another thing to be sharp, or "witty", or to poke fun at somebody because we think that is in itself very enlightening. Just when we want to be pedagogical we must calmly explain and prove our sense of humor by the distance we have from the subject, namely by showing that we are not its slave.

Trouble awaits us always if we depart from what is involved in the nature of the case. Who, for example, guarantees that the pedagogue himself is right and has understood the article he is criticizing? Has he really *studied* some highly controversial subjects which appear in the article and about which he is very sharp? Is it excluded that *he* errs and fights in the dark instead of clear understanding? I myself have in controversial matters never failed to leave this possibility open and—have behaved accordingly. Thus I wrote in the answer to Mackiewicz ("War as a Way Out?")²:

"This is our opinion, founded on historical facts, comparative research, careful observation and long experience. In spite of this (theoretically this must [!] be admitted) we can still err [!], and indeed are not concerned with being right at all costs. Everyone able to help us better our recognition of the 'inner essence' of things is warmly welcomed. . . .

"The rules are determined—unimpaired freedom to reply until all arguments are exhausted. Where we have to accede [the German word I used was "nachzugeben", meaning "to give in"] it shall be put on record with the greatest exactitude in the interest of firm knowledge, an accounting will be made and our future behavior shall be strictly guided by it. So far we have not had the slightest cause to expect behavior other than this from Mackiewicz, able as he is to present his opinions with courage, sharpness [does one understand what that word means here?], clarity, decency and honesty. In all discussions there are those who are sincerely interested (amongst

² *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 7, 1950.

them 'opponents' towards whom one immediately feels friendly because of a certain mental attitude) and there are commercially minded busybodies, mere windbags, patent scoundrels, etc. For good democratic [!] reasons, everyone has to be treated according to his merits [!], otherwise the dubious elements, burdened by resentment [!], imagine that they can, unrecognized [!], fish in troubled waters. In the struggle for truth, sharpness is not only a 'necessary' but also a sublime evil. Truth can only be laid bare with the sharpest instruments—wounds incurred during the fight are scars of honor to be borne with pride, and are indications of vigorous health."

To make it clear even (so I thought) to the most superficial reader what was meant by the word "sharpness" in discussion, I concluded:

"Should a discussion, in spite of the decent rules, end in definite enmity, and an accounting be refused, another elementary rule asserts itself whereby all observers can form their judgement: Silence on the part of one or the other must be regarded as an admission of defeat.

"In order to formulate [!] our difference of opinion on the question of 'Bolshevism' also in the sharpest [!] way and thereby to expose it to all possibilities of attack [!] we conclude:

"The Stalinist super-fascism is not identical with Bolshevism. Instead it is the *organic* end-product of capitalist society which Bolshevism was not able to overcome and which found in Stalin the appropriate tool to disclose its last consequence: Naked slavery and barbarism."

I have always insisted that the art of reading is one of the greatest arts on earth, and if one can read only the word "sharpness" one reads, as we say in German, with a dungfork. In any case: The same as the attitude of distinguishing between *fight* against pigs, scoundrels, windbags, arrogant cheaters, resentful people and so on on the one hand, and *discussion* with decent and sincere friends or opponents on the other—the same as this attitude never leaves me, in the same way I have always distance to myself and never exclude the possibility to be mistaken. The most recent example for this assertion is to be found on page 97 of "Philosophy in Economics" where I, faced with the over-seriousness in the discussion, declared in the same manner as with Mackiewicz:

"All this is said, however, in order to stress again that there is no problem or objection with which dialectics is not familiar—it is not said to prevent the presentation of objections, as has been announced, in a more precise and written form. It is said, in other words, for reasons of loyalty: the writer of this, feeling extremely sure in this domain, wants not only to make clear what the objector is up against, he wants to give him also every opportunity to broaden the ground for his 'attack'. He does, in spite of his 'sureness', not think that there is ever an end to learning, and if he can learn something by being 'defeated' [!], the better for him personally and cognition in general. He tries for this reason to *provoke* written objections by quoting a provocative epigram which Erik Erikson coined and with which he (risking his neck) whole-heartedly agrees:

The positivist, the pride of the nation,
the light by which we flourish and grow,
is composed of the negation
of everything he doesn't know.

If that does not help, nothing will help, but it would be unfair not to remind the positivist that certain doctrines (among them scepticism which is but a variety of idealism) can only be refuted in praxis, never by formal logical or theoretical considerations [I forgot to add the word *alone*]. In adding further that the writer has laid out and will lay out traps (including for himself, for he cannot see his own serious face without feeling an inner itching) he begs not to care whether it is Hegel or somebody else who speaks. Though he has enough to say of his own, he worries not about originality but about the explanation [!] of a rarely understood subject."

Though the main point in this is to show that again I left the question right or wrong open (and if I'm wrong, I did not *understand* the positivist or other philosophers), I have quoted the passage in full (a) in order not to be accused of having left out my "provocation"; (b) to prepare with it for another point I have to speak about and in which my concern with "explanation" and nothing else is of importance. Here I will only repeat that personal sharpness in discussion is *contrary to the nature of the case* and will bring trouble not only for those who will not refrain from it but also for those who do not dissassociate themselves from it. We can, in fact, not work and stand before ourselves and the public if we do not stick to our declaration that "writers and readers interchange through a profound and thorough dialogue" and that we must work toward "proper [!] clarification of controversial [!] questions". [Editorial to No. 2.] I cannot and refuse to speculate on anything other than that which I have before my eyes, and since I have only too often been bothered with personal considerations such as the "motives", "intentions", "bad character" and "viciousness" of other people instead of sticking to the point, I have explained: I have my *own* viciousness which consists in *relying entirely on that which people actually do and—on the mechanism of our organizational concept*. If there is something wrong with the intentions of somebody, it will sooner or later, at one point or another, come out, and the moment it comes out is the moment to "deal" with it. If you have not enough breath to wait and think you can do anything more than work *correctly*, you will waste much time and energy, achieve nothing and damage yourself in every respect. In the first line, your own thinking capacity will suffer and instead of "pushing" others you will be pushed in the wrong direction, instead of clarifying the matter you will lose sympathy and esteem. In one word: In politics one must never permit that personal feelings or impressions of whatever sort interfere with the judgement of the business at hand—otherwise thinking suffers from the beginning.

I will show this presently on the given scale (which is necessarily very small) and first state: *Unwarranted sharpness is weakness of one*

sort or another. Conclusion: In the present case the weakness in thinking shows up in confusing psychological considerations with pedagogical intentions, whereby the psychological considerations lie outside of the subject with which the friend in question has to operate, namely in the non-understanding of other people. Moral: The only way to make people understand is to clear up the matter with the author point by point and give clarification to the best of one's abilities, for there is no other kind of pedagogy than that (to use a famous phrase) of enlightening patiently.

Now, in view of our declarations and in view of the fact that a lot has been written (not to speak of what has been said in discussions) about the question of sharpness, what is the essence so typical in this question that it alone accounts for 80 to 90% of the existing confusion? In order to draw the balance I could again quote the "Anti-Cur" and say:

"Dull organs, dear Sir, in the first place. Secondly, slight and transient impressions made by the objects, when the said organs are not dull. And thirdly, a memory like unto a sieve, not able to retain what it has received."

You see, it is a sad fact that innumerable people run more in quest of "the adventures in all things", so that "nothing but the gross and more carnal parts of a composition" "will go down" and everything of importance for themselves is lost. As the question of sharpness demonstrates, such people exist, of course, also among us, and they have very seldom or (in certain cases) *never* made the "wise reflexion" and *never* have drawn the "curious conclusion" that they themselves may suffer from "dull organs" or, if the organs are not dull, may give the subjects not even a chance to make other impressions on them than "slight and transient" ones, in which case it is but a matter of course that they have a memory like a sieve. And since such a memory retains mostly the adventures (I call them the fiction in "science") and the gross and carnal parts (I call them the unessentials), it is clear that this memory cannot be *trained* for real understanding unless its bearer realizes that the word "Training is everything", too, applies to himself. Indeed, if I observe how people rush through an article or document or book and are on the spot ready to judge, to argue, to condemn, to accept and even to fight over the stuff, it is no wonder that the stuff remains Greek to them and that they sometimes fight and argue wildly with statements or "theorems" which are nothing short of fantastic. And since these fantastic theorems reveal again weakness, I heave a sigh and conclude the point on sharpness with another quotation from the "Anti-Cur" (whose essence is, what very few have understood, the discussion of the question of tone, style, form and taste, but not of sharpness as a *carte blanche* for irresponsibility and dubious proceedings):

"It is a singular blessing, that nature has form'd the mind of man with the same happy backwardness and renitency against conviction, which is observed in old dogs—'of not learning new tricks'."

Let me, before I come to the next point, give another quotation which is related to the question of sharpness, extremely pertinent for

many people and therefore worthy to be reflected upon many times and with deep evaluation in *all directions*. It was a happy day for me when I found this quotation in Dutscher's article on "American Higher Education"³ because it expressed in other words what I have "preached" (I really can't use the word "said" here) for long years with nearly no effect at all:

"Some persons have a real mania for completeness, they must express every step. They are the most intolerable of companions, and although their mental energy may in its way be great, they always strike us as weak and second-rate. In short, the essence of plebianism, that which separates vulgarity from aristocracy, is perhaps less a defect than an excess, the constant [!] need to animadvert [!!!!] upon matters which for the aristocratic temperament do not [!] exist. To ignore, to disdain, to consider, to overlook, are the essence of the 'gentleman'."

Indeed, indeed! To ignore vulgar and irrelevant trash; to disdain bullshit and personal considerations; to consider what is the crux of the matter and decisive; to overlook minor points and mere technicalities; to refrain from expressing every step—that is what the educator needs who must himself be educated.

"I wish it may have its effects;—and that all good people, both male and female, . . . may be taught to think as well as read."

The next point revolves around "Capital" and philosophy. When I, last year, returned from the country, two studies were under way: one on "Materialism and Empiriocriticism" and one on "Capital". I found, to make it short, the discussion around these subjects simply "impossible", namely proceeding with total misunderstanding and suffering on the one side from the desire to solve every problem at once, on the other side from the desire to kill the bull before it had been caught. It goes without saying, too, that a number of friends had taken little trouble to prepare themselves for the discussion. In this situation I offered to write what received the title "Philosophy in Economics"—the aim being to arrive at an *understanding* of the subjects before criticizing and even rejecting them. Well, insisting on *understanding* and not acceptance (which everybody, I stressed, was free to do or not to do) I became soon astonished and expressed repeatedly my bewilderment about the spirit of hostility in which the discussion proceeded. Some friends felt that science had to be "defended" against dialectics which was considered to be "dangerous"—the conviction was voiced that dialectics was but nonsense and shit and that nothing could come out of it. But even if that were true (which was still to be seen), it had nothing at all to do with *understanding* it and especially not with *understanding* of what is going on in "Capital". So I stressed again and again the latter point and finally wrote that "to *understand* Marx" is "all [!] we can aim at, leaving the decision to accept or to reject his views to everybody's insight, outsize or whatever he likes". You have here

³ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 7, No. 25, 1955.

the connection with what I say earlier in the present letter, namely that I'm concerned with "the explanation [!] of a rarely understood subject" and that "explanation and nothing else is of importance". To explain then what is at stake, I must state that all my efforts to get first a fair hearing remained fruitless. We have capable scientists among us to whom I proposed to help me and to work certain problems out—again only for the sake of mutual understanding. In private discussions, the atmosphere was good and my proposal readily accepted, but as soon as the discussion in the group started no headway could be made. I was faced with what I call the annihilation-tendency in bourgeois society and which has its roots in general competition and fetichization.

Now, I have written and spoken so often about the fetichization of everything and even every word in bourgeois society that one should think: Those who have read and heard it so many times should have reflected a little and have asked themselves whether they, too, were not at one point or another under the influence of this horrible tendency which culminates in the desire for annihilation even where there is not the slightest necessity for it. In order to bring the point home I wrote:

"If, by the by, this new plea to consider [!] in the endlessly discussed notion Being nothing other than the abstract notion itself and to leave everything else aside [ignore and overlook it!]
—if this is again fruitless, we must slowly become conscious that the maxim applies: *Contra principium negantem non est disputandum*. Arisen under social conditions where all development is effected by mutual annihilation [!], this maxim too reflects but the inhumaneness of our society. Yet it must be pointed out that dialectics stands above the blindness expressed in the maxim and aims for its part at no annihilation at all. If it rejects, for instance, certain claims of formal logic [above all its totalitarian claim to "exclusive" validity] and even has a low esteem for the wisdom exposed by it, it nevertheless can follow with ease all its operations and admits not only their *limited* validity, but *retains* its principles also as a starting point and material for thinking. Since this has been explicitly stated before, one can only wonder that the question could come up whether or not dialectics recognizes *any* validity, however small, of formal logic. Let it be said, then, that the non-exclusive [!] standpoint of dialectics is not formal logic *or* dialectics but formal logic *and* dialectics."

Alas, one can drive a horse to the well, but one cannot make it drink. Theoretically, all of us recognize and speak of "fetichization"; practically, many of us fetichize many things which come under their hands. My drive for understanding was by some friends countered with the rejection of everything not in accordance with the way of thinking they are accustomed to in science. Since this science is *official* science (in question are physics, mathematics, formal logic and even semantics), it is strange to believe that it alone should be free from the influence of the fetichization-tendency and not change its face in a rational society. I myself firmly believe that, for example, "the mathematization of the sciences and life is one of the most

horrible features in a totally mechanical society", in fact a totalitarian feature *par excellence* and a truly barbarian one. I firmly believe that a rational society will greatly reduce the role of the "applied" sciences, that mathematics, physics and so on will be "humanized" and heavily profit from dialectical thinking. But this may be as it will—I express my opinion and discuss it and leave the rest to the development, never fearing the "danger" that others present and discuss *their* opinion but giving them, on the contrary, every opportunity to prove me wrong. I say that this "liberalism" in theoretical matters is important for us and in complete accordance with the attitude outlined in the "Great Utopia".⁴ Alas, it is not yet understood and not yet the attitude of some friends when it comes to "science"—only recently the totalitarian claim of what is thought to be the "only" science was crassly expressed when I, speaking again about understanding of "Capital", got the answer: "You don't know what a scientific method is". Since this bold assertion was no argument against what I had said, I replied: "For *argument's sake* I can agree with you, but that is no proof that you have *understood* Capital." Indeed, the friends in question have so succumbed to the fetishization of "one" science that they not only block their understanding and argue about cherries when one speaks about winter-time but also come, without knowing it, into conflict with their political and scientific convictions. I will leave science here aside and stick to politics, though I must say that it is "something" to believe "scientifically" in the *exclusive* validity of *anything*, especially from a "positivist" viewpoint. Where this belief leads, we will just see in politics.

It is basic for us that we (if we want to operate at all) have common political goals and must agree on politics, which agreement in concrete activity is reached (if need be) by discussion and majority decision. There is nothing totalitarian in it, for the man who wants to defend Stalinism, etc., is simply in the wrong place if he comes to us and is free to join another family. No such agreement, however, is necessary or even required in theoretical matters or in questions of "Weltanschauung," where everybody can believe what he likes and where everything will remain in the state of permanent discussion as long as class society exists. Things stand simply so that a Catholic *can* be a better or more progressive man than a materialist or Marxist and that correct theories are by no means a guarantee for right politics. This kept in mind I have constantly rejected the fetishization of theories and many times declared that we are not "Marxists" (I myself am *not*) and have, to make it as plain as possible, no "official" position in theoretical matters, be it psychology, dialectics or whatever you want. In short: Theories are necessary for the development in all human affairs, but the "Utopia" dispenses not for nothing with "the 'prescribed party opinion' which can be [and as we will see *is*] interpreted *ad lib.*" With regard to Marxism the "Utopia" even

⁴ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 1950.

declares: "... the century-old controversy over Marxism has also become historically redundant. . . . The *position* with regard to theoretical dispute [!] is *essentially* the same as that of a practitioner who is engaged in saving mother and child by a Cæsarian operation and no longer discusses whether historical materialism or Christianity is the correct doctrine." [Emphasis added.]

The "Utopia" is, as we should know, besides our political activity and some editorial declarations, the only *official* item in our arsenal, for in it we declare to "the world" *what we are and to which principles we are bound*. To rest then with the "Utopia" (proof that its "spirit" permeates all my writings will be given), our attitude toward theoretical matters is clear, except for those who fetishize single sentences and are unable to view the whole. It was thus against the principles to which we are bound, when the attempt was made some months ago to "brand" us (as I would like to say) as "Marxists" and to declare that we had an "official" position in a number (at least) of theoretical subjects. The attempt was correctly rejected, but only to be revived from the other end by one of those who had opposed it. This friend is of the belief that there exists a contradiction between the first and the third volume of "Capital". Old as this belief is, it is a matter of discussion and nothing more—a point of theory in which opinions will eventually remain divided. I ignore how seriously it was meant, but the effect of fetishization (leading to conflict with political convictions) became apparent when the friend declared somewhat like this (I rely on a report): "If the contradiction between the first and third volume of 'Capital' is not recognized and Marx's theory of value not rejected, I will split." Now, I like to consider this declaration as a jest, but the heat and the spirit of "butchery" with which the discussion proceeded even around details by no means important for the present discussion (which goes wildly through the whole of "Capital" without order) makes it advisable to clear up what is involved. And involved is that we, for strictly political reasons, have no "official" position on theoretical matters. The opposite view would lead to serious political blunders (see my criticism of the "Weltanschauung"-blunders committed by German friends in the letter to Mrs. Rösler), and the biggest blunder would be to split on theoretical questions which have no bearing on our politics. Everything will be destroyed if we are not consistent. If it is a great political and rightfully rejected mistake to brand us "officially" as Marxists, then it is the same mistake to demand in the best "conformist" manner the rejection of theoretical views as the condition for adherence to our family. Again: Everybody is free to accept or to reject Marx's theories—the only thing we have to reject is the totalitarian demand for an exclusively valid view on scientific, theoretical and philosophical questions. Should we, after years of work and constantly emphasizing the non-totalitarian stand in these matters, suddenly degenerate to such a degree that we cannot tolerate differences of opinion? Or does somebody believe that we have not constantly emphasized the non-exclusive view? Well, in that case I have only to quote and begin with one

from the "Remilitarization"⁵ (whose re-reading as a whole I strongly recommend):

"The logical chains of Debes have substance: what is to be scientifically [!] criticized in these chains does not [!] touch the kernel of his correct conception. To overcome capitalism is indeed the whole problem; errors concerning the rise of the evil which plagues us and similar errors are unimportant [!] at a time when it openly presents itself as evil and the main [!] thing is to eliminate it."

From the "Reply to Colman":⁶

"In a movement, however, which is serious about its ideas, and which is governed by these and not by other factors and motives, the theoretical error would have been overcome in the universality of the task [!], as theory is not at all [!] absolute [!], but must be tested and corrected in practice [!]."

"Even less today does the question pose itself as a theoretical problem of the direction in which capitalism may develop, and whether it may still open avenues into a great future. This is no longer a matter of theory [!] but rather through the terrible happenings of the present it has become clear as daylight that capitalism is only capable of ruining us. The actual [!] problem really consists only in at last taking that obvious step which once and for all puts an end to the horror.

"This is not . . . absence of concern with 'theoretical disputes' [!], but conscious elimination of theories which have lost practical significance [!] . . ."

From "Jacques":⁷

The element of pessimism "refutes any over-seriousness and declares even the 'seriousness' of the universe with its 'grave' problems to be what it is when all reflection has been done with: vanity, futility, fuss, nonsense. It makes an enormous difference whether one indulges blindly in such vanity or approaches world and life with the distance [!] flowing from the insight that 'all this' is a play—a serious play, certainly, but a play nevertheless."

"For Diderot has realized the *academic* nature of the problem and—to put it frankly—the *futility* of it. In this, he has again foreseen much of modern philosophy, for if the *basic implications* of human freedom are still very vital, the dissection of the question as academic metaphysics is not; the interest has been transferred [!] more to what the *tangible effects* of the problem *will be to society*, which is precisely where Diderot would have put it. It is to the philosopher what the squared circle is to the mathematician—a philosophical chess game. . . . Academic questions are not complete nonsense on the one hand, but on the other, they are not the sum total of truth. A thinking man considers them seriously when he is serious, knows how

⁵ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 7, No. 27, 1956.

⁶ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 7, 1950.

⁷ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 4, No. 15, 1953.

to play with them when they refuse to bend to his contemporary world."

"It must be clearly understood that (a) Pantagruelism has practically *overcome the adamancy* of 'profound thinking' and has recognized the academic nature and futility of certain problems; that (b) to work consistently [!] with ideas which are *primitive, fundamental* and *eternal* in their *simplicity* amounts to the same as to work with the most profound ideas of the most profound system; that (c) to be concerned *solely with actualities*, to indicate always a *reasonable* resolution of the problems of life and to oppose ever *reasonably*, ever *realistically anything that can offend or hinder one's liberty* means to *solve* our problems more 'profoundly' than any other philosophy can, for it means to solve them *practically* not theoretically or intellectually."

"The same care to understand [!] all and to clarify all, but inside of *certain limits only*, and the *same calm scorn* for what overflows them and exceeds man."

From "Critical Revue on Doctor Faustus":⁸

"Indeed, a man who acts with due reflection;
who manysided is, yet has no Faustian [!] notion;
the limits [!] sees of knowledge and perfection,
and yet to both will cling in deep devotion."

Finally, from "Majority and Minority" the "incredible" assertion: "To understand a theory means to overcome it, to be no longer dependent upon it in practice."

I think this selection suffices to characterize our stand on theoretical matters and shows (the same as in the question of "sharpness") that this approach or attitude never leaves me, whatever the special context may be. And thus I expressed, from a philosophical point of view, the non-exclusive standpoint in theoretical matters in the following formula:

"(a) Every concept which lends itself not to the unification with its opposite or cannot be 'aufgehoben', is false at bottom, to wit *absurd*; (b) the concept of dialectical *materialism*, for example, would be false if it (consistently driven to its ultimate consequences) would not become identical with (consistently developed and objective) dialectical *idealism*." ("Philosophy in Economics".) In the same place I note that with Hegel the word "Aufhebung" indicates that "something in its hitherto existing exclusive [!] and antagonistic [!] form has been or is to be overcome (cancelled out, annulled), while its *content* is preserved in the opposite as the result of its self-negation."

Now, what is the balance in the question of *understanding* "Capital" and philosophy? It is the same as in the question of sharpness—the adventures, the gross and carnal parts are in quest but the essence is

⁸ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 6, No. 24, 1955.

⁹ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 3, No. 10, 1952.

lost: the essence which should protect us against the fetichization-tendency and make us discuss instead of annihilating each other.

* * *

Next comes the so-called "cold war"-theory which is sometimes handled like a rigid dogma, i.e. as a formula explaining everything. This "theory" has its origin in the following passage from "Germany and World Development":¹⁰

"The decisive obstacle to Europe's rebirth is not America, but Russia. . . . The secret of the situation, and of America's weakness, consists herein: Russia has become her most reliable and most indispensable policeman in Europe. It is essentially from this that Russia draws its 'remarkable' force in its haggling with the other powers: there is no other country that can be entrusted with the merciless-gruesome police function, once the Stalinist régime falls."

If one understands the Hungarian events one can easily see the orientative value of this statement, but important is here only the development of the "theory" which continues in No. 2 of *Dinge der Zeit* and is reproduced in "Interim Balance Sheet":¹¹

"And as far as the war clamour, or the Russian-American conflict, were concerned, it was necessary to reiterate: It is deliberately overlooked that the conflict is simultaneously determined by a common interest. And it is this common interest which—not excluding the possibility of an undesired explosion—makes the military collision of the opponents in the near future improbable."

This was factually written and first published in 1947 and served as a protection against the war hysteria (for which nobody of us has ever fallen). But it is not much of a "theory"—it is a line of orientation which continued in the "Balance Sheet" proper with the sentences:

"Why are Thomaser and many other progressives taken in by the 'war danger', and why have they never once hit on the idea that the Berlin 'crisis' is *perhaps* a mere screen (designed to humbug the world public, i.e. the victim) behind which other far more important problems are being decided? It is not the case, in the final analysis, that the treaty partners, no matter how vigorously they haggle among themselves for the spoils, are merely playing prearranged roles? However that may be . . ." [Emphasis added.]

You see, there is no rigidity involved and the "Balance Sheet" shows merely that events confirm the "common interest" of the players much more than their enmity. In this spirit the "theory" goes on:

"Has it been forgotten that there was once a wartime agreement in accordance with which the Western Allies undertook not to invade the Balkans against Hitler? Such agreements are surely not devoid

¹⁰ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1948.

¹¹ *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1949.

of reason or significance. Add to this the fact of the Western Allies' loyalty to their wartime agreements, and less simple-minded souls will be quite justified in saying: Perhaps [!] it is only the world political unity of America and Stalin that lies concealed behind the economic and political 'expulsion'—perhaps [!] the Danube Conference is 'once again also' a show to draw attention away from much more important events! There is, after all, a remarkable 'trend of stabilization' permeating all these events which revolve around matters long since finished with (in this case, Stalin's domination of Eastern Europe, sanctioned by the Western Allies)."

Then:

"The war danger is a swindle!—The ratification and sealing of the (indispensable) policy of the Iron Curtain and the (long since decided, long since accomplished!) partition of Germany lie (among other things!) concealed behind it, and will be proposed as the only way out."

A comment on a new conference:

"With that, the deeper unity between the West and the East is once again restored, for the Conference occupies itself with fixing the 'controlled rations', a matter which need not be gone into again here."

Finally:

"We are moving in a circle—it is the Interim Balance Sheet which returns to its starting-point: the continuous action of the Morgenthau-tendency, overriding all unavoidable quack remedies, and the 'West-East' unity (the form which hidden complicity has given to the none the less existing conflicts), revealing the danger of war to be so much bluff for the period under consideration. . . ."

"At the end of the war the most urgent [!] problem that faced the Allies was the question of what was to be done with the millions in Asia and Europe who were expecting the fulfilment of all the promises that had so lavishly been made to them. To leave them to their own devices and to give up the means of controlling them . . . would have been dangerous in the extreme. Both for Stalin and the Allies, the best solution was to let them vanish behind the 'Iron Curtain' and 'be consumed' by Stalin to the best of his ability. The frontiers then demarcated in Europe and Asia have not been altered in the slightest by any subsequent conference or secret treaty. On the contrary, Stalin, under hypocritical protest from the 'democratic' world, has since simply consolidated all the positions then ceded to him. Here again, the taming of the masses of resisting peoples was not the least [!] weighty consideration. Stalin's domination of half of Europe and an important part of Asia . . . was in itself a guarantee against any significant revival. And this, of course, entirely suited the interests of the most purposeful faction of the American bourgeoisie. It was a deal equally advantageous to both sides. . . ."

That is literally all of the cold war—"theory" contained in the "Balance Sheet", but this theory received through Mackiewicz the name of "Business Partnership" and remained what it was: a line of orien-

tation which (supported by many facts and events) was more reliable than any other. And so we read, always in the same spirit, in the answer to Mackiewicz:

"That Americanism is dangerous to the *future* of humanity, accords neither with the facts nor with Mackiewicz's descriptions. It is just as much the decisive danger of the *present* and has systematically engineered this present with its horrors of atom war (even though diverted by counteracting forces) in order eventually to establish its autocratic world rule. And this is just why America itself installed the 'Russian policeman' and, by no means, 'only' did business with him. By Stalin's dictatorship over half the world it has made its own business *secure*. From here on Mackiewicz can illustrate for himself the further [!] course of events with the help of American crime films. . . .

"Frequently in these films there is a gangster hero who acts the nice man and opposes all shooting because he considers these methods 'irrational' as long as less direct methods (like blackmail, simple knockout blows, etc.) will do. All his business is done by a 'stooge' —he himself is the 'great unknown' in the background who holds the threads together in his hand, hatches plans, selects victims and remains the 'great unknown' even for the 'stooge'. At a certain point, however, shooting can no longer be avoided and this fatal business circumstance which is first dealt with by the 'stooge' eventually and inevitably reaches the point where the 'great unknown' has to make himself known and has to . . . shoot himself. Sometimes, too, the conflict arises because one of the stooges has, like a Roman proconsul, become refractory and discovers that he is not paid according to his merits by the gangster hero or that he is in danger of being 'liquidated' as soon as the gangster hero no longer requires his assistance in plundering the community. Or there are from the beginning two gangs who, under the pressure of circumstances, unite against the common enemy, but shoot at each other when the danger (which may also be an undertaking too daring for the single gang) is past.

"In the world situation as elaborated for us by Mackiewicz all these variants exist together but America certainly plays more the role of the 'nice man' in the great business partnership, who holds the threads in his hand and leaves the dirty work to the 'stooge' and the, at the same time, competing [!] gang. Under these conditions, it is not possible to find any sense in Mackiewicz's example of the solitary burning hut and the big conflagration, for it is absolutely out of place and has nothing to do with the 'inner essence' of the matter. . . . It is not a question of a solitary burning hut which might grow into a conflagration in an *indefinite future*, but of the gangster king who sustains the first conflagration and will start a *second* in a *determinable and definite future*. The moment for this second conflagration will have arrived when the gangster thinks himself able to do without his proconsul in the Kremlin, that is, when he no longer needs his help after overcoming the dangers that threaten him from

the side of the community, and when, in the spirit of the crime films, he takes revenge for the many insubordinations of the accomplice."

This again is all that "War as a way out?" contains on the question. I have gone through all the other issues and found that everybody else who wrote on the "Business Partnership" (Cold War) keeps in line with the foregoing quotations. I could now quote passages from the Remilitarization-book concerning the subject of the Cold War, but that would cost me translation work and is not necessary because the line is clear. Where, then, is our "theory" sometimes handled like a rigid dogma or formula which explains everything? Well, it happens in discussions with people whom we try to win over or to convince and where "facts" are thrown back and forth until all proportions are lost and the question appears as one of "either-or". This, in turn, leads to the presentation of a very mechanical picture of the "dependence of the world" on America and Russia even in the purely economic sphere which, however, is not the same and leaves much more "leeway" than in the case of a country dependent on the *military occupation* by a foreign power. We must keep in mind that there is also a "real conflict" (that all variants exist together) and that, therefore, by no means all "facts" fit into the rigid "partnership". The latter functions mainly and in the first line where the "taming of the masses" is the problem—in other instances will the attempt to "express every step" and to fit everything into the partnership easily lead to the "blockade" of the discussion and of understanding which I have observed (among other instances also in the discussion with a writer, who keeps friendly relations with us but could not be convinced that all the "facts" presented fitted into a one-sided picture). In short: Useful as the "theory" has been—we should here too be on guard against fetichization and rather say when the deadlock is reached: Well, it doesn't matter! Believe what you want—the main thing is that we for nine years did not fall for the "hot" war and that, whatever explanation one likes, the U.S.A. has not lifted one finger for the *liberation of the nations oppressed by Russia*, which would be the most easy way to crush that terrible "enemy" of the biggest power in the world.

* * *

Two other instances of theoretical confusion.

In connection with the refutation that we are "Marxists" I have been asked to make "clear my differences with Marx". Now, since these differences have no bearing on our politics and since I thus saw no need for it, I declined and finally said to the friend who had asked me: "With some of my differences you have already agreed". The friend denied this, but I can only say: I have, among us, not heard of *any disagreement* with two differences of *great political importance* which I have with Marx and upon which above all the "Great Utopia" rests, namely the denial of proletarian class-consciousness in connection with the "proletarian dictatorship", and the denial of the role of the state as such for the development of the future society. Because of the *great political importance* of these

differences the friend may say (and had said before) that these are just "political" differences. Yet he is mistaken, for these differences involve "just" a lot of economic, sociological and philosophical differences concerning the development of monopolies, the middle classes and handicraft, the "planned" economy, the question of consciousness (directly connected with the economic development of the middle classes) and others. I will in all probability come to *write* about these differences when I get a chance to write what I want to write—to *speak* about them makes little sense as long as there is little understanding of Marx himself. Thus I have, in fact, introduced some points of difference in my writings, I did it only without telling that a difference is involved and avoided therewith a great deal of uninformed discussion. For all practical purposes, however, it is sufficient to agree on the *political* differences, whatever other differences there may be. The *theoretical* error in regarding them *only* as "political" consists in confounding Marx's *critique* of political economy with simply "economy", where it is in reality *sociology*.

Then I have been "beseeched" to speak (in two evenings or so) about the "inner limits" of capitalism. I declined again, seeing no possibility to do it in following "economics" and pointing out that it is all contained in "Capital", while, on the other hand, there is as yet no basis to do it in a philosophical way except by precise writing. I can today say nothing else but what I have written about this problem in a note to "Majority and Minority" and which I thought everybody of us had read:

"External circumstances have so far prevented the completion of a new edition of a study written in 1943 . . . concerning the so-called 'retrogressive movement' of capitalist development. Nevertheless, a special chapter concerning the core of 'retrogressive development', the 'inner limit' of the capitalist mode of production, can be published soon if—the space at our disposal permits. [I was at that time in reality optimistic and believed I had a chance to write the thing out soon.] The chapter in question was not included in the 1943 version and is an attempt at making the reader acquainted with the complicated economic problem without [!] long-winded economic [!] investigations. Incidentally, the layman in economics is hardly at a disadvantage here compared with the 'expert'. In order to show *by economics* [!] what is at stake, it would be necessary to write a new 'Capital', with no more hope of its being understood [!] than was the old one [!]. Where is the 'layman' who has any idea that the number of economic books, pamphlets, treatises, special studies, etc., is literally legion and yet that the problem of the inner limit (usually presented and discussed as 'the law of collapse [better: breakdown] in capitalism') has still not become any clearer than in Marx's [!] presentation?"

Thus I can only repeat that anybody who looks for the inner limits can find them in "Capital", provided that he studies it without the attempts to criticism in the manner of "independent thinking" which amounts to a critique of the as yet "unknown". And in the case of

real study he will also better understand the paragraphs in "Majority and Minority" where I speak of two "extreme" cases with their inner limits which, in themselves, make the matter pretty clear. There is indeed nothing in heaven and on earth which has not an inner limit which causes it to perish, but one has to be a philosopher in order fully to understand it. I can't help the friend who is of the opinion that my writing on philosophy has caused more "confusion" than anything else. Either one tries to learn how to move in these matters, or—the unsatiable quest for the gross and carnal parts will spoil every effort.

* * *

Next comes the "Plan" which some friends think would give people a better understanding of our ideas and so on. I'm sorry that I have to disappoint such hopes, for the "Plan" is merely a propaganda affair and "makes clear" nothing other than the fact that the material prerequisites for abundance exist and that the existing wealth can be distributed under the perspective of ever increasing well-being. Already the "Utopia" declares concerning the character of the task:

"Since the material bases for the overcoming of the crisis of humanity demonstrably exist, the task is reduced to a mere [!] measure of administration [!] which can be accomplished with existing forces and means and can be enforced by democratic majority decision".

"... the movement should base itself politically [!] upon an economic plan which contrary to all previous endeavors takes world economy and the immediate possibility of the increase of wealth as its point of departure, which rejects the *rule* of the proletariat as an absurd contradiction, and for the first time wants to overcome bourgeois society only with such means as the latter has itself organically produced.

"The simplicity [!] of the formula for the party and the plan [!] is the outcome of a development appearing to be almost hopelessly complicated."

Read after that what I have written in the "Remilitarization" about the plan, where one finds also the assertion that *to speak of a plan means together with the necessary explanatory by-work only to deliver the sober proof that the preconditions exist for an economy which serves exclusively the satisfaction of needs.* (I translate "freely" because I have the English version not at hand.)

Indeed is the question of the plan so simple that nothing but that "sober proof" is required and to show how the existing wealth can be redistributed. The more I came to think about it, the more embarrassed I became by this damned simplicity which makes it so difficult to give the matter "flesh". It is for this reason that I originally intended to get everybody involved in the work on the plan and to include in it everything from production up to education and "city-planning". Since we have not the forces to do this I have to stick to the strictly "scientific" side of the matter (production

and redistribution) and thereby fear to disappoint those who think that the plan would be something like the "tableau of the future society" or, in other words, a blueprint in form of another Utopia. Such a Utopia, if well done, would not be useless, but it is not the thing we must aim at. I highly recommend, however, the *careful study* of a Utopia called "News From Nowhere" by William Morris which I have read these days with the greatest pleasure. It is in most respects an excellent, extremely stimulating and intelligent book which gives "vision" and understanding to those who have "imagination" in the creative sense.

* * *

Next comes the question of our "theories" in general—a matter of so great confusion that a friend rightly felt: "There is, for instance, so much talk about the 'retrogression theory' and so much 'operation' with it, but one gets the impression that nobody understands what it is." The friend proposed therefore to be more "empirical" in our political orientation, and I know it will come as a surprise when I say that I not only agree with him but also assert that we have *de facto* no theory. In other words: We have *factually* operated *empirically* and nevertheless, as the discussion around the "boom" shows, fragments of *unpublished* theories have been fetishized in such a manner that again a rigid "retrogression" is demanded or—we lose orientation and believe to have a wrong "theory". The source of the trouble is once more that the gross and carnal parts are swallowed and the meaning is lost. I start at this point to participate in the "boom"-discussion and say first:

Whatever our friends know from other sources or from *oral* discussions—our life as a group begins with the *publication of our magazines* and we can be for the public *nothing other than what we have published in them*. Now, has anybody really reflected upon and understood what it means when our first editorial says:

"The editors of *Dinge der Zeit* have good reason to forgo programmatic declarations, solemn assurances or promises, as is the wont with newly published magazines. But this break with a tradition . . . by no means bespeaks absence of a programme or definite views. On the contrary: Both programme and definite views exist and will be demonstrated [!] on all 'contemporary issues'."

Ah, I know only too well that the first editorial was considered to be a "fine declaration", but I also know only too well that the "demonstrations" which followed were taken as the "theory". It was thus completely overlooked that "Germany and World Development" was a "description" of the world status and not the "retrogression theory" or, to cover the ground, a theory at all. On the contrary, it insisted: ["In describing this process, we are not dealing here with theoretical elucidations but rather with the course of development itself which can be factually established."] . . .

Paul Ecker

KASSEM: IRAQ'S WOULD-BE NASSER

When Nasser, abetted by his fellow colonels, seized the helm of the Egyptian State seven years ago, his path was lined with velvet. The papier-mâché monarchy of King Farouk fell with barely an audible sound; there was nothing behind it. What misgivings were had by the British, already committed to surrender of the remnants of their Egyptian position, were more than neutralized by tacit support from the United States. A show of independence by Naguib, who began to take his figurehead position seriously, was the only shadow of internal opposition; it proved to be no more than a shadow. Once dispelled, it revealed Nasser secure in the role of Egyptian Atatürk—the classic figure thrust to the fore to accomplish for a burgeoning capitalist class what the class' own representatives, lacking power and resolve, are unable to accomplish for it: Destruction of the constricting bonds of feudalism. With no serious opposition to overcome, Nasser had no need to call upon the long-suffering and silent Egyptian population for support, a situation that endowed him with an unparalleled internal freedom. The limitations he was to encounter later on were only those insurmountable ones imposed by Egypt's narrow, stunted economy and her resulting precarious international position. Only the political weakness of the other Arab States, all but Syria still shackled firmly by feudalism, enabled Nasser to appear as strong man anywhere else than on the Nile.

Strikingly parallel—and yet with decisive differences—have been developments of the past year in Iraq. Like Egypt, Mesopotamia was ruled by a corrupt, gluttonous monarchy that had tied its fortunes—considerably greater than Egypt's—firmly to the West. Like Farouk's, it fell almost noiselessly at a single blow, toppled, as in Cairo, by a camarilla of Army officers seeking to realize the destiny of a class so stunted that it had never been able to assert itself. Like Nasser, Kassem stood ready to don the uniform of a cut-rate Bonaparte. But the obstacles—of which the gingerbread monarchy was by far the least—were of a far higher order.

Far more, first of all, was at stake. Egypt, were it not for the canal running through its territory, would be a matter of thorough indifference to world politics. Iraq, on the other hand, with its abundant oil supplies, constituted the last important domain of British influence in the Middle East. While the lack of direct British support made it possible to overthrow the London-oriented monarchy before a finger could be lifted to save it, Britain's quick reaction made it clear that Kassem was at the beginning, not the end, of his troubles. The quick despatch of British troops to Jordan, together with talk of a march to Baghdad by Jordan's British-equipped army,

put immediate pressure on the new Iraqi "strong man", who, it soon became clear, was going to be no stronger than the forces he could muster to support his shaky régime. Differences between those who wanted to rely for that support upon Nasser and those who saw salvation only in a beckoning finger to the impoverished Iraqi workers and peasants produced the first big split in Kassem's young régime.

Kassem, doubtful about Nasser's value as an ally and unwilling to subordinate himself, in any case, to the Egyptian colonel, quickly became convinced that only by mobilizing the direct backing of the Iraqi population could he stand up to both his internal and external enemies. The Iraqi masses played no rôle in the overthrow of King Faisal; they were a sledgehammer that was not required. But it soon became plain that while a few Army battalions were more than enough to install Kassem in Baghdad's ruling palace, it would require far more than that to keep him there. The despised working people and students who took to the streets in jubilation at the monarchy's downfall presented themselves as the obvious resource, all the more so since it soon became apparent that Kassem would have to be against them if not with them. In Nasser's situation, he might have been willing to risk the attempt; in his own, it would have been suicidal. To place himself at the head of the demonstrating masses—a position designed to keep them under control as well as to support the new régime—required measures more fargioing than those needed for a *coup d'état*, however. Most important of them all was the division of the great sheikhs' estates to the nation's virtually landless peasant population, the precondition for development of that internal market necessary to expansion of the Iraqi economy on a capitalist basis. Kassem did not hesitate to initiate this although the step proceeded to isolate him from all but the most radical of the nation's ruling strata. Alarmed at the entire development, with its threat of a situation that might get out of hand, elements led by Col. Arif turned more openly to Nasser as a base of support on which to resist the growing entry of the Iraqi population on to the political stage, arms in hand. Unwilling to unloose a torrent they felt might not be controllable, they sought a second coup to overthrow the overthrower. Lacking internal resources, however, the movement was quickly smashed in Baghdad, leaving only a few unco-ordinated tentacles in the provinces. When officers there, acting in concert with sheikhs alarmed at their apparently imminent dispossession, attempted to revolt at Mosul, they were cut down by their own troops. Kassem's victory cost his régime the last vestige of Nasser's friendship, for the Egyptian dictator not only began to see his Iraqi counterpart as a rival for Arab leadership and the exploitation of such areas as Syria but was thoroughly alarmed at the very real danger of the Iraqi infection spreading to other portions of the Middle East, including Egypt itself.

Nasser, however, was not the only one with something to fear. Kassem now found himself in danger of being engulfed by the very tide that he had helped to create. Like many others before him, he

soon found it was far easier to summon the people on to the stage than to banish them to the wings once they have played their rôle to the beckoner's satisfaction. Their entry, furthermore, had brought to the fore those specialists in political parasitism the world over, the Communists. Seizing the opportunity offered by Kassem's dilemma, they swarmed to the head of the movement with their principal contribution consisting of slogans of "Death", always their political strong point. Within a few months they had advanced from the shadows of obscurity to a significant position in the nation's political life. Their position strengthened still further by the rôle of the armed militia in suppressing the Mosul putsch, they became Kassem's sole remaining political ally—an uncomfortable marriage from which Kassem soon set about to free himself.

An end to the tensions racking Iraq's external relations was the first precondition to a reassertion of Kassem's authority, by now thrown seriously into question despite his popularity among large sections of the population. His first significant move was to call off the violent demonstrations against Nasser, sponsored in large part by the Communists. The gesture was not unappreciated; it produced a relaxation of Egyptian hostility as Nasser began to realize that Kassem was now the first line of defense against the main enemy—the voiceless Arab masses. Communist-led or not, their entry on to the scene threatened to upset the entire jerry-built political structure that Nasser had been building so painfully with the absorption of Syria and other segments of the Arab world into his United Arab Republic.

An appreciation of Kassem's situation was not long in coming, either, from those seasoned political observers in Whitehall. Its first manifestation came in the form of an offer by London to supply arms to the Baghdad government, offering it a shelter to windward. Made despite Kassem's action in pulling the rug out from under the Baghdad pact, the principal instrument of British policy in the Middle East, there was no mistaking the significance of the move. It constituted an announcement that Britain had decided the "main chance" to retain its vital oil holdings in Iraq now lay with Kassem.

Bolstered by a little solid ground under his feet, Kassem turned his attention to "normalizing" the internal situation, his eye fixed firmly on the goal: To achieve in Baghdad the unchallenged power that Nasser had achieved in Cairo. He announced his goal plainly: Rule without political parties, which in practice meant rule without all parties except Kassem's Socialist Democratic Party. The Communists, amenable to one-party government only when it is theirs, were the first to feel the lash of Kassem's new whip. Confronted by an unmistakable warning from Kassem to cease their drive for formal recognition, they beat an immediate retreat by giving up a long-standing clamor for inclusion in Kassem's government—an inclusion that, under the circumstances, would have put them in a strategic position to finish him off entirely. It represented an important victory for the would-be dictator, but not yet a decisive one.

More significant but still not decisive was Kassem's victory at

Kirkuk, where an abortive Stalinist uprising followed Kassem's refusal to accept Communist adherents into the government. Failing to win support in the Army, the insurrection was crushed, demonstrating for the nation that Kassem still held the decisive cards.

With the burning problems of land distribution and nationalization of the foreign-owned oil wells still unresolved, Kassem cannot afford to move too rapidly against either the armed and aroused population or the Communists who have perched themselves at its head. In prospect, it appears, is a prolonged campaign of attrition to sap the strength of the nether classes. Political astuteness dictates a succession of promises, token gestures and half steps to solve Iraq's social problem, alternated with measures to weaken opposing forces, disarm the population, clear the streets and restore order—all by imperceptible degrees. Admonitions that "the revolution is over", that a "return to work" is required, that all can be left in the hands of Kassem, can be expected. If Kassem does not move too quickly, if there is no misstep, he is likely to achieve his goal in the absence of an honest, radically democratic opposition clear and consistent in its own aims, free of subservience to the interests of either imperialist bloc and ready to show the next step forward rather than point the road back. Only the unlikely prospect of an early popular upheaval in Syria, Egypt or Iran would be likely to alter this perspective.

This prospect, while the best on the horizon for those nations with a stake in the Middle East, is far from reassuring to the British, who have the most to lose in Iraq. For even should their oil holdings remain untouched, which is by no means certain, they have lost their firm if concealed grip on the Iraqi government. And Kassem, who must still mollify an aroused population, will likely be forced to chip away at British oil interests, seeking at least a better share of the profits. Even more distressing to the British must be the possibility that a clash with Kassem over oil may lead to American involvement in a solution that would rob England of exclusive privileges, as it did in Iran. Washington has remained at a considerable distance from Kassem, and the Baghdad government, for its part, has maintained cool relations with the United States, but the past five years have witnessed an amazing series of flip-flops, changes of front and realignments in this part of the world—a typical product of unsettled social and political conditions. American aid to Kassem, in return for possible concessions to American capital, would be far from the most startling of these.

Despite this, the balance sheet of seven years of Middle East upheaval shows that imperialism has suffered apparently irretrievable losses. Accustomed first to direct rule and then control through the manipulation of pliant governments, it is reduced, after Nasser and Kassem, to influencing events from a distance. It must exert greater force to accomplish a given end, must deal with midget Bonapartes who have their own ambitions and who can mobilize the support of oppressed populations, if the need arises. And in the background

lies the rising threat of an awakening Arab population, no longer content to grub in the desert for a miserable existence while the nation's wealth is hoarded by sheikhs or siphoned abroad. The United States, with its more powerful economic structure, is in a position to draw some temporary benefit from the situation. But for Washington as well as London, a thorough appraisal of the scene cannot be heartening. The land that Lawrence won is slowly slipping from their grasp. August, 1959.

Francis Russell

THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND

To future literary historians Ezra Pound's *Cantos* will no doubt rank with *Finnegan's Wake* and *The Making of Americans* as one of the three most extended logographs of our time.¹ Pound would not relish the comparison with Gertrude Stein or Joyce. The former he considers a literary freak without substance. Although he pioneered in seeing his friend Joyce into print he finds *Finnegan's Wake* a sterile word game. As opposed to such obfuscations he feels that his *Cantos* are direct and meaningful. His intention in them is not to confuse but, as he defines the function of literature in his essay *How to Read*, "to incite humanity to continue living". His goal is, by spreading the dogma of *The Cantos*, to bring about a cultural-economic revolution. This he believes possible, with the egotheistic assurance he shares with Gertrude Stein and Joyce. He still maintains that if his views had been listened to in 1937 and 1938, if the message of *The Cantos* had been absorbed, World War II could have been avoided.

For Pound his *Cantos* are as clear as Pope's *Essay on Man*. Farther on in *How to Read* he insists that an author's work should "maintain a precision and clarity of thought, not merely for the benefit of a few dilettantes and 'lovers of literature', but maintain the health of thought outside literary circles and in non-literary existence, in general individual and communal life". This definition is admirably stated—though hardly applicable to his poem.

The overwhelming impression one receives at the outset from *The Cantos* is of a patchwork of disparate entities lacking any binding thread. Pound has always been rather the enthusiast than the scholar

¹ See Guy Davenport's essay, "Pound and Frobenius", in *Motive and Method in the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Columbia University Press, 1954), p.33. "... the most controversial and difficult poem in the language ..."

and these polyglot entities represent his preoccupations over half a century. It has been characteristic of him that once he has seized on an idea, whether literary, historical or economic, he is overwhelmed by its significance. These ideas treated as semi-independent motifs form the substance of his Cantos.

In the earlier Cantos Pound juxtaposes fragments of his Prevençal studies, minutiae of Italian history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, recurring references to fiscal and monetary developments, and echoes of Homer and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* reflected in the serene landscape of antiquity that is his happiest re-creation.

Pound's versification derives from his old imagistic technique. It is irregular, elliptical, retaining something of the *non-sequitur* quality of the symbolists, with staccato flashes of lyricism. These latter tend to diminish in the middle Cantos as Pound's absorption with Social Credit and monetary theories grows. "Usury" is his all-inclusive term for what he dislikes in finance capitalism. To him the modern world is a usurious hell, and his several Inferno Cantos describe scatalogically the fate of Poundian usurers. These Cantos, in spite of the vigor of Pound's attack, lack essential coherence and are marked by a brutal personal rancor. As T. S. Eliot remarked, Pound's hell is for others.

Following the Inferno Cantos is an arid bloc containing unassimilated chunks of early American history—extracts from the *Boston Gazette*, statistics and contemporary correspondence, arranged in the barest of verse forms or sometimes merely left as elided prose. As counterpoint there are similar blocs of Italian mediaeval history interspersed with recurrent earlier motifs. Pound's shifting interests over the years are marked by shifts in emphasis among his motifs, but there is no thematic progression.

Canto LII begins a new cycle, introducing explicitly the Chinese motif and the Chinese ideogram which from now on tends to appear in the text or scattered down the margins throughout succeeding Cantos. The first ten of these Cantos are in fact an epitome of 3,500 years of Chinese history as traced by Pound's elliptical method.

As is well known, a later section of Pound's poem, *The Pisan Cantos*, was written while he was a prisoner in an American internment camp in Italy after he had been arrested because of his broadcasts over the Rome radio during World War II. Here for the first time there is a fitful intrusion of the personal mood. Pound the individual appears, a tired old man, to be followed almost at once by the doctrinaire Pound and Pound the fragmentarian. Nevertheless something of the fugitive lyric quality of the early Cantos manages to emerge, and there are occasional brief passages that are extremely moving.

According to Pound his Cantos are "the tale of the tribe", both a judgement of and a directive to western civilization. These have served as the reflection of his individuality for 40 years, his planned *magnum opus*. Into them he has worked his thoughts, enthusiasms, memories, beliefs and crotchets. After commencing the Cantos he stopped writing other poetry—except for his translations—making out

that all his earlier verse had been merely tentative, a preparation for his final word-pyramid.

The completed word-pyramid was to consist of 100 Cantos. So far, with the Pisan Cantos and the subsequent Rock-Drill Cantos, 97 have been written of which 95 have appeared in print. As Pound explained his ground-plan to W. B. Yeats, the hundredth Canto would complete a structure like a Bach fugue in which there would be neither plot nor chronicle of events, and no logic of discourse.

The key to Pound's plan is to be found in his study of the Chinese ideogram. His introduction to this came through his association with the art historian Ernest Fenellosa. It was the latter's essay, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, that gave Pound his theory of poetic unity. But Fenellosa himself distorted the nature of the Chinese ideogram. According to him it is a "verbal medium consisting largely of semi-pictorial appeals to the eye". He goes on to say that "in reading Chinese we do not seem to be juggling with mental counters but to be watching *things* work out their own fate". The fact is that to a literate Chinese the impression given by the ideogram is that of a word, not a concrete image.

For Pound, who himself knew no Chinese, this misinterpretation was an illuminating doctrine. Such formalized picture-writing seemed to him a liberation from the abstractions of western thought forms. He felt that the only real was the concrete. Ideograms seemed to him a means of attaining this concreteness, of reaching out to the sensuous world of reality. Taking Chinese hieroglyphics as his model Pound set out to use what he considered a similar method in his Cantos by creating his own ideographic equivalents.

The poem's apparently unconnected themes are to be regarded as ideograms. These, as in Chinese, are separate entities, not linked grammatically. In Pound's conception the unity of the Cantos develops as a formative act on the part of the reader. It is not a creation of the author. The reader himself is the final catalytic agent, and the poem is part of his process of becoming.

It is, of course, possible to write an extended philosophical poem using unrelated material such as is found in *The Cantos*. The creative personality of the poet is then the impelling force that transmutes this varied matter into a vital and cohesive whole. When, however, Pound shifts this burden to the reader he dodges the issue central to poetry.

The analogy of *The Cantos* with the Chinese ideogram is based on a misapprehension. On the one hand we have a highly stylized literary language several thousand years old, and on the other we have a modern poet's idiosyncrasies raised to first principles. Such dissimilarities cannot be equated. The method of *The Cantos* is no more to be compared with the ideogram than colour is to sound.

According to one of his interpreters Pound judges that the Cantos will not only purify language, but will aid in the renewal of society itself.² So far in its 40 years of growth the poem has altered neither

² See Harold H. Watts' *Ezra Pound and the Cantos* (1952), p.33.

Possibly, under certain circumstances, this prosaic subject-matter could form the raw material of verse. But as it is found here and in similar segments throughout the *Cantos*, it cannot be conceived of as poetry.

Whatever frustrations the Cantos with their bulk and obscurity may hold for the general reader, they have in their extended appearance been an unrivalled quarry for the academic dragomen. Allan Tate has found *The Cantos* the most influential poem of our time. Hugh Kenner considers it "the first comparably seminal poem in English since *Paradise Lost*."³ Elsewhere, thrusting Milton aside, he goes back to Dante to maintain that as regards Pound's poem "there has been no effort at moral definition of comparable scope since the *Commedia*."⁴ As to the meaning of the poem Mr. Tate, in his essay included in *An Examination of Ezra Pound*, is more or less indifferent to such an irrelevancy, remarking that "there is no reason why poetry should not be so perplexingly simple as Mr. Pound's and be about nothing at all."⁵ At the conclusion of the same essay he remarks blandly of the 30 then-published Cantos, that these are "enough to occupy a loving and ceaseless study—say a Canto a year for thirty years, all thirty to be read every few weeks just for the tone."⁶

Mr. Kenner, who has been Pound's most diligent elucidator and apologist over the past decade, achieves at times a state of ecstatic awareness in his contemplation of *The Cantos*. Of the clear but essentially commonplace lines on usury from Canto LI:

Wool does not come into the market
the peasant does not eat his own grain
the girl's needle goes blunt in her hand
the looms are hushed one after another . . .

he can write: "the total effect is of something throttled, blurred, stilled. The dactyl throbs beneath the mutes. The air of Hebraic chant, systole and diastole, is a further component in the elegaic feeling".⁷ Of a later Canto he proclaims "line after line carves its mutation in the inarticulate heart's tone".⁸ And as an example of this total quality he gives:

Death's seeds move in the year
falling back into the trough of the sea
the moon's arse been chewed off by this time

semina motuum
semina motuum

In 1925 Pound published his *Draft of XVI Cantos*, a revision of his earlier work concluded by the *Inferno Cantos*. He followed this two

³ *An Examination of Ezra Pound, a Collection of Essays*, edited by Peter Russell (New Directions, 1950), p.85.

⁴ *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (New Directions, 1951), p.301.

⁵ *op. cit.*, p.68.

⁶ *ibid.*, p.72.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.72.

⁸ *ibid.*, p.72.

years later with *A Draft of Cantos XVII-XXVII*, and in 1930 combined the two earlier books with three additional Cantos to make up *A Draft of XXX Cantos*.

Canto I, the original third Canto, is an abbreviated version of Book XI of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus's journey to the underworld to consult Tiresias. This descent into hell is a recurrent idea with Pound—one of his key thoughts is the conception of modern society as a hell of finance capitalism—and it may well be that he then intended it to set the tone of his poem. As a contrast the Canto's concluding lines are based on the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*.

Pound's translation is not from the original Greek but from a Latin version of the *Odyssey* by the sixteenth-century scholar Andreas Divus. According to Pound's theory his use of Divus was a way of indicating the assimilation of the rediscovered Greek culture by the mediaeval mind. However, the result is no different than if he had gone back to the original Greek or to one of the English interlinear translations. His version, though taut and with echoes of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse, has a mannered archaic quality about it.

Whatever value Pound attached to his Greek synthesis, he gives only the barest of hints about Divus:

And then Anticlea came.

Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is, Andreas Divus

In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.

And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outward and away

And unto Circe.

In actual fact, as opposed to theory, Pound's use of the Divus translation was accidental. Some years before the First World War he picked up an old volume by this obscure and forgotten Latinist from one of the bookstalls along the Seine. The book also happened to contain a translation of the *Homeric Hymns* by a Georgius Dortona, and it is because of this casual juxtaposition that Pound ended his first Canto with the lines from the *Hymn to Aphrodite*.

The whole structure of the Cantos is based on similar accidents throughout Pound's life. The poem with its theme fragments represents the progression of his interests and his enthusiasms and his personal relationships. These he has exaggerated into first principles. He has seen himself as the enlightener, sybilline and absolute. What he has lacked is perspective, and with the years the lack has become pathologically apparent.

Although the question of Pound's sanity is one that his critics have preferred to pass over, it is a question that cannot be fairly disregarded in a consideration of *The Cantos*. Legally Pound has been ruled insane by a board of government psychiatrists. Until his recent release from St. Elizabeth Hospital the formal position of the United States Department of Justice has been that, if at any time in the future he should be declared sane, he would then go on trial for treason. This assumes that Pound was sane up to and during the war when he made his Rome broadcasts and until the time he wrote the Pisan Cantos. If there has been such a dividing line between Pound's

sanity and his insanity, there has been no reflection of this in the later Cantos. As Peter Russell observed in the introduction to his *Examination of Ezra Pound*, when one compares a Canto written in 1920 with one written in 1945, it is not possible to observe any change of style.

Practically speaking it has been obvious for a long time that Pound would never stand trial. According to William Carlos Williams he had no objection to the hospital, feeling that once outside he would be in danger from his enemies.⁹

The psychiatrists' report states that "Pound's personality, for many years abnormal, has undergone further distortion to the extent that he is now suffering from a paranoid state". It goes on to speak of his "pressure of speech, discursiveness and distractibility", all qualities that have a particular application to the Cantos.

There has always been an obsessive quality about Pound's attitude both to life and literature, a single and simple-minded obliviousness to any other point of view than his own. Whatever seemed important to him had therefore to be important to the rest of the world. This obsessiveness comes out in the perverse distortions of his vocabulary—kulchur, kikeology, Auss'ralia, frogbassador (for French ambassador), kawledj, Christian abbreviated to Xtn, etc. In a more vituperative form it is shown in his attacks on persons and viewpoints he dislikes. Taking up his obsessional theme of usury in *Guide to Kulchur* he can write: "Abomination of desolation and may hell rot the whole political ruck of the 19th century as lasting into our own time in the infamy which controls English and U.S. finances and has made printing a midden, a filth, a mere smear, bolted down by the bank racket, which impedes the use of skill and implements for the making of proper books or of a healthy population".¹⁰ Similarly in the Cantos one often comes across such coprolitic lines as these in Canto L:

S . . t on the throne of England, s . . t on the Austrian sofa
In their soul was usura and in their minds darkness
and blankness, greased fat were four Georges
Pus was in Spain, Wellington was a jew's pimp
and lacked mind to know what he effected.

Again and again Pound falls back on childish invective in lieu of interpretation. He underlines Alexander Hamilton as "the Prime snot in ALL American history"; Franz Joseph he describes in Canto XXXVIII as a "greasy basturd", and in Canto XXXV as "the bewhiskered sonovabitch François Guiseppe". Any insight into history that Pound might have had he buries under cranky bias in

⁹ *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (Random House, 1951). See pp. 340-341. "I had heard of . . . an attempt to have Pound removed from St. Elizabeth's for treatment under more favorable surroundings. But Pound refused to entertain the idea, stating that he knew he would be shot by an agent of the 'international crew' the moment he stood outside the hospital gates."

¹⁰ *New Directions*, 1938, p. 184.

such passages as: "The Bourbons were garbage. The French court was punk. Civilization did exist in the Italian cities of the Quattrocento."¹¹

Pressure of speech, discursiveness and distractibility are indeed the primary factors in much of Pound's work. Better than any reticulated glossary do they account for the form and structure and method of *The Cantos*. Such lines as

God bless the Constitution
and *save* it
 'the value thereof'
 that is the crux of the matter
and god damn the perverters
 and if Attlee attempts a Ramsay
'Leave the Duke, go for gold'
 'In less than a geological epoch'
and the fleet that triumphed at Salamis
 and Wilkes's fixed the price per loaf

are a case in point.

However, Mr. Kenner by some process of critical introspection finds that in these same lines, "via Pound's characteristic ethical integrity, the conservation of discrete aesthetic values becomes coterminous with the saving of the Constitution and the Theory of the Just Price". He goes on to unravel the tangle of Pound's references: "The 'perverters' are moral, aesthetic, political, economic. Ramsay Macdonald was the reformer who modulated into Toryism. The 'geological epoch' was Mencken's suggested limit for the achievement of some reforms. The Fleet at Salamis illustrated the principle that the State might lend money instead of collecting it; not yet a grasped idea, but a geological epoch has not yet elapsed since 480 B.C. The price fixed per loaf is one value at least conserved, though from Pound's economic view mistakenly."¹² These are undoubtedly the threads of Pound's thoughts in the above passage, and jejune enough they seem when disentangled. Although Mr. Kenner seems to think there is some ultimate value in this bombast, he is not able to indicate why.

Like the various Joyce critics before him he falls back on cosmic comparisons: "The values registered in the poem (*The Cantos*) are not imported and affirmed by the poet, but discerned by him in the record of human experience. . . . It is not a twentieth-century poet-moralist that puts them there. . . . Their origin is not human but divine."¹³

Mr. Kenner's preoccupation with *The Cantos* has led to a state of auto-hypnosis in which he seems at times to echo Gertrude Stein's *Lectures in America*. "In the Cantos", he asserts, "while everything may be said to be as important as everything else, no action,

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 230.

¹² *The Poetry of Ezra Pound, op. cit.*, pp. 223-224.

¹³ "The Broken Mirrors and the Mirrors of Memory" in *Motive and Method in The Cantos of Ezra Pound, op. cit.*, p. 6.

single or multiple, is being offered the reader for dramatic participation. This is not to say that the experience of reading the poem is not continuously exciting. But there is no sweep up to and away from the climactic moment or symbol. Preliminary motifs are not discarded. The reader must remember all things and contemplate all things in a simultaneous present. What would seem to be inhuman demands so made are largely abrogated by the internal reverberations of similar themes, cunningly disposed throughout the poem".¹⁴ Again, what the reader might ultimately hope to gain by meeting such inhuman demands is not explained.

The climactic symbol of the Cantos is Pound's own personality, and this in his view is enough. If one asks what the connection is between an adaptation of a book of the *Odyssey*, a Canto devoted solely to one of Pound's several translations of Cavalcanti's *Donnami Prega*, a wordless Canto that consists merely of the musical score of the pleasantly minor *Bird-Song Chorale* of Clement Janequin, and the groups of Chinese characters scattered throughout the text and along the margins of the later Cantos, the answer is that unique entity, the mind of Ezra Pound.

Pound emphasizes repeatedly what he calls "words in action". Throughout his long poem he has offered his various themes and theses, not as a pattern, but for the reader to make his own pattern. "Make your own Gestalt of Kung (Confucius), Homer, the middle ages, the renaissance, the present, with the greek decline in its due proportion . . . and the peripheries", Pound wrote in his *Guide to Kulchur*.¹⁵

The statement is a summing-up of the method of *The Cantos*. After the reader has formed the Gestalt pattern in his own mind from the ideographic Canto segments he will then apply his acquired words. For him there will be no scholar's ivory tower, but rather a transformation of the world politically, socially and economically according to the Poundian *Weltanschauung*.

The fact remains that although the Cantos have given scope to various elucidators, they have not had—nor will they have—any political, social or economic effects whatsoever. Works as dithyrambic in their varying degrees as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *The Countess Cathleen*, *Leaves of Grass* and *The Communist Manifesto* have had profound non-literary effects on their own and later times. The practical effect of the Cantos has been nil.

Pound has always been a romantic. Born in a pioneer shack in Idaho and brought up in that vast empty landscape, it was natural for him to see the world a-historically. His literary enthusiasms have been personal. When he first arrived in Europe, he came as young D'Artagnan-Villon. As he wrote in *Histrion*, one of his earliest poems:

Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One François Villon, ballad-lord and thief.

¹⁴ *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, op. cit., p. 277.

¹⁵ op. cit., p. 344.

Only a young man without a sense of history could have imagined it possible to work himself into the time-spirit of another era as Pound attempted to do in his *Personæ* poems. Pound was poetically gifted, and the *Personæ* have melody and tone and vigor, in spite of their pseudo-archaic qualities. But they cannot reanimate the past. They are more the echoes of the 'nineties poets, the Middle Ages *en dentelle*. Pound is probably the last poet in English to continue to use "thou" and the plural "eth" verb ending.

The verse technique of the Cantos, varying little from the first draft to the post-war Cantos, is impressionistic—like the brief effect of an irradiation of sunlight on a pellucid landscape—but the lyric passages are never sustained, and they are apt to end in a blurred echo of Laforgue or else to dissolve into some pedantic crotchet.

Pound is at his happiest in the re-creation of a classical landscape, a creation well adapted to imagist technique, as for example in his retelling of the Bacchus-Lyæus legend in Canto II:

Glassgint of waves in the tide-rips against sunlight,
pallor of Hesperus
Grey peak of the wave,
wave, colour of grape's pulp,

Olive grey in the near
far, smoke grey of the rock slide . . .

And we have heard the fauns chiding Proteus
in the smell of hay under the olive-trees
And the frogs singing against the fauns
in the half-light.

Such passages, infrequent enough in the earlier Cantos, are suppressed in the middle Cantos where Pound's personality seems to harden. Yet even in the early Cantos the smell of hay under the olive-trees will be followed by the involved nomenclature found in Canto XI,

Quali lochi sono questi:

Sogliano,
Torrano and La Serra, Sbrigara, San Martino
Ciola, Pondo, Spinello, Cigna and Buchio,
Prataline, Monte Cogruzzo,
and the villa at Fufiano
Right up to the door-yard

And everything else the Rev^{mo} Monsignore could remember . .

or the flat obscenity of the dull joke that concludes Canto XII.

Canto XX has the sharp imagery of Odysseus's voyage—if one excepts the canned-beef solecism:

"Their names are not writ on bronze
"Nor their rowing sticks set with Elpinor's:
"Nor have they mound by sea-board.
"That saw never the olives under Spartha
"With leaves green and then not green,
"The click of light in their branches; . . .
"Give! What were they given?

Ear-wax.

"Poison and ear-wax,
and a salt grave by the bull-field,

neson amumona, their heads like sea crows in the foam,
 "Black splotches, sea-weed under lightning:
 "Canned beef of Apollo, ten cans for a boat load."
Ligur aidee.

Yet this is followed by the farrago from Canto XXIII:

How dissolve Irol in sugar . . . Houille blanche,
 Auto-chenille, destroy all bacteria in the kidney,
 Invention-d'entités-plus-ou-moins-abstraites-
 en-nombre-égal-aux-choses-à-expliquer . . .
 La Science ne peut pas y consister. "J'ai
 Obtenu une brulure" M. Curie, or some other scientist
 "Qui m'a coûté six mois de guérison."
 and continued his experiments.
 Tropismes! "We believe the attraction is chemical."

The intermixing of non-English words and phrases throughout *The Cantos* is an accentuation of Pound's earlier versification habits. All his linguistic fancies have been worked into his poem—French, Italian, Spanish, German, Provençal, Latin, Greek, Arabic, and most spectacularly the Chinese written character. These transliterations, by their obvious alienating of the common reader, have contributed as much as anything to the enigmatic aspect of Pound's opus. He himself explained that such foreign expressions merely reinforced the text, seldom adding anything not stated in English. One of his elucidators has asserted that half their poetic function is in their very inscrutability.

It is possible to maintain that by such a mélange of languages a poem's frame of reference is enlarged to embrace not one culture but many. Yet for each arithmetic progression in this direction there is a geometric progression in the loss of communicability. How far this mongrelization of language can go may be seen in a recent 700-line poem, *Libretto for the Republic of Liberia*, by a derivative American Negro poet who besides inserting crumbs of all the main European languages into his poem, as well as Arabic, Yiddish, beach-la-mar, Hebrew, Welsh and Japanese, also uses Gullah and a variety of African dialects. Hybridism cannot go much farther than:

jai hind (dawn comes up like thunder) *pakistan zindibad*
britannia rules the waves my pokazhem meeru
 the world is my parish *muhammad rasulu 'ullah*
hara ga hette iru oh yeah higashi no kazeame, etc.¹⁶

The ultimate conclusion of such linguistic breakdowns would presumably be an epic of some 1,500 lines embracing all the world's languages, each line from a different language, and the whole comprehensible to no one.

As his *Cantos* expanded, Pound wove a modern rag-bag into his literary and historical fabric. Often it is as if the morning paper had found its way among the pages of his compilations. The flight of Chamberlin across the Atlantic in 1927 in the wake of Lindbergh with a boisterous passenger named Levine has long since been buried in the newspaper files, although noted at the time in Canto XXVIII:

¹⁶ M. B. Tolson (Twayne Publishers, 1953), p. 21.

Nor Levine with the lucky button
 Went on into darkness,
 Saw naught above but close dark,
 Weight of ice on the fuselage, etc.

In the same stanza Pound refers to the equally forgotten Paris American Legion convention of that year:

Great moral secret service, plan, Tribune is told
 limit number to thirty thousand,
 only the highest type will be included,
 propaganda within ranks of veterans,
 to keep within bounds when they come into
 contact with personal liberty . . . with the french authorities . . .
 that includes the Paris police . . .
 Strengthen Franco-American amity.

He takes it for granted that the reader's frames of reference match his own, even to such trivia as the lucky button that Levine carried with him on his flight, and the instructions issued to junketing Legionnaires. In the Pisan Cantos, as another example, one is supposed to know that the recurring Uncle George, "Unkle George observing Ct/ Volpe's neck", is the eccentric Congressman George Holden Tinkham, and that the line "'You from New England' barked the 10th District?" is synecdoche for the same Tinkham who was from the 10th Massachusetts Congressional District.

Sometimes within his ellipses, particularly in the *Draft of XXX Cantos*, Pound achieves a muted music even when the meaning is not apparent. Students of history would without too much difficulty recognize the legendary story of Pedro I of Portugal and his murdered wife Inez de Castro whose long-dead body he placed on the throne beside him when he became king, forcing the Portuguese nobles to do homage to her as queen:

Came the Lords in Lisboa
 a day, and a day
 In homage. Seated there
 dead eyes,
 Dead hair under the crown
 The King still young there beside her.

And even for those to whom the meaning is not apparent there is a certain solemnity in the movement of the verse, just as there is in the following from Canto VII:

The house too thick, the paintings
 a shade too oiled.
 And the great domed head, *con gli occhi onesti e tardi*
 Moves before me, phantom with weighted motion,
Grave in cessu, drinking the tone of things,
 And the old voice lifts itself
 weaving an endless sentence

Nevertheless, it would be difficult for anyone without being told to recognize this as a portrait of Henry James.

In 1934 Pound published *Eleven New Cantos XXXI-XLI*, in 1937 *The Fifth Decade of Cantos* and in 1940 *Cantos LII-LXXI*. These

Cantos of his middle years show the increasing rigidity of his mind and the fixing of his compulsive beliefs. There is a shift of emphasis to Social Credit, and Chinese and American history. Mussolini makes his appearance as the Boss in the last of the *Eleven New Cantos*. The date given in the Canto is "XI of our era", i.e. the Fascist régime.

These middle Cantos become more and more transliterations of Pound's immediate reading matter, where such matter is not transposed directly as in Canto XXXVII:

4 to 5 million balance in the national treasury
 Receipts 31 to 32 million
 Revenue 32 to 33 million
 The Bank 341 million, and in deposits
 6 millions of government money

and so on.

There are echoes of a Sismondi footnote,¹⁷ if no compensating clarity in:

ob pecuniae scarsitatem
 S.P.SENEN^{sis} ac pro eo amplissim
 Balia Collegium civices vigilantiae
 totius civitatis
 Urban VIIth of Siena, Ferd. I mag duce d^o n^o
 felicitatem dominante et Ferd. I
 Roman Emperor as elected.
 1251 of the Protocols marked also
 X, I, I, F, and four arabic
 OB PECUNIAE SCARSITATEM

Pound devotes most of Canto XLV to his pet crotchet of usury again in lines which are not without poetic merit. For Pound when he is not too hagridden by his theories is still a poet. He shows it even more clearly in Canto XLIX in lines reminiscent of his earlier translations in *Cathay* and anticipatory of his Confucian *Classic Anthology*:

For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
 Rain; empty river: a voyage,
 Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
 Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
 The reeds are heavy; bent;
 and the bamboos speak as if weeping.

But Pound can also in an accompanying Canto write a journalese harangue about the depression years:

FIVE million youths without jobs
 Four million adult illiterates
 15 million 'vocational misfits', that is with small chance for jobs
 NINE million persons annual, injured in preventable industrial accidents
 One hundred thousand violent crimes. The Eunited States ov America
 3rd year of the reign of F. Roosevelt, signed F. Delano, his uncle.

¹⁷ Most of the Italian history in the Cantos derives from J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi's *A History of the Italian Republics* (English edition, Harper, 1837).

With apparent obliviousness to the connotations, Pound maintains that he spent 19 years preparing the above indictment.

Cantos LII-LXXI is subdivided into ten Cantos in which Pound verifies a history of China, and ten Cantos that are for the most part a pastiche of early American historical documents. With the Chinese Cantos Pound uses his shorthand method to scan over 3,000 years of history in 100 pages. Such a method could only justify itself by giving a sense of immediacy to the past. What one finds instead is a confusing sequence of rulers, wars, violence, famine and more wars. This Canto sequence fails to carry the weight of its history.

Here, for the first time in English poetry, the ideogram makes its appearance—or as Mr. Kenner expressed it more sacerdotally, “the Chinese characters extend their benediction over the poet’s activities”.¹⁸ Pound’s besetting conviction that the salvation of English literature lies in adopting what he conceives to be the thought patterns of the Chinese ideogram has here reached the point where he demands familiarity with the characters themselves. It is another example of the inflexibility of his outlook that he could expect to bring any general acceptance of the Chinese written character into the English-speaking world. Disregarding the practical absurdity of any such expectation, the theory itself is not a valid one. Again, Pound seems unaware of the straitjacket effect that the ideogram has had in China itself, what Toynbee has called “the incubus of the mandarin”.

In his Chinese Cantos Pound has drawn on de Mailla’s *General History of China*¹⁹ in the same way that in his earlier Cantos he drew on Sismondi. The substrata of these Cantos are the notes Pound made in his reading, transmogrified by his idiosyncrasies. Taking a random example, one can scarcely feel that the emotional impact of a period is better contained in the anachronisms of the following verses from Canto LV than in the successive volumes of de Mailla:

MOU-TSONG drove out the taozers
but refused to wear mourning for HIEN his father.
The hen sang in MOU’s time, racin’, jazz dancin’
and play-actors, Tartars still raidin’
Mou’s first son was strangled by eunuchs,
Came OUEEN-Tsong and kicked out 3000 fancies
let loose the falcons

Even when he is dealing with Chinese history Pound asserts his dislikes in the same intemperate language he uses against Europe and America. Describing the stone Confucian tablets that were broken up and built into Foe’s temple, he adds in a parenthesis, “Foe’s, that is goddam Bhuddists”. Kublai “was a buggar [sic] for taxes”, etc. Rarely now does one come across the singing line, as:

day falls like a fluttering flag.

¹⁸ *The Poetry of Ezra Pound, op. cit.*, p. 251.

¹⁹ J. A. M. de Motriac de Mailla, *Histoire générale de la Chine*, Vol. I-III (Paris 1777-1785).

Nor is there any more satisfactory pointing up of history in the subsequent ten American Cantos. What can be said for Pound's version of the Boston Massacre in Canto LXII except that it is scarcely possible to determine the event from the description:

so about nine o'clock in the morning Lard Narf wuz bein' impassible
was a light fall of snow in Bastun, in King St.
and the 29th Styschires in Brattle St.
Murray's barracks, and in this case was a
baker's boy ragging the sentinel
so Capn Preston etc/
lower order with billets of wood and 'just roving'
force in fact of a right sez Chawles Fwancis
at the same time, and in Louses of Parleymoot . . .
so fatal a recision of aim,
sojers aiming??

During the later 'twenties and 'thirties Pound did much random reading in the early history of the United States, particularly in books relating to the Adams family. The bales of books he had sent him at Rapallo he took apart and underlined—letters of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin; Van Buren's belatedly published autobiography; the diary of John Quincy Adams; above all, the ten volumes of the works of John Adams. He found in the early days of the Republic what he considered a laudable historical situation, with virtues similar to those of Italian Fascism. In fact he combined his enthusiasm for the corporative State with his feeling for the Adamases by ending Canto LXII with the words *ARRIBA ADAMS*.

He incorporated his underlinings into the text of the Cantos, sometimes in abbreviated verse form, sometimes without alteration. In Canto LXIV there is an extract from John Adam's diary for the year 1771:

1771 make potash and raise a great number of colts
which they send to the West Indies for rum
Splendours of Hartford and Middletown
just as we got there
Indian pudding pork greens on the table
One party for wealth and power
at expense
of liberty of their country
wars, carnage, confusion
not interested in their servitude
I am, for all I can see, left quite alone
13th Thursday

Of this group Cantos which he refers to as the Adams' Cantos Mr. Kenner writes: "The enterprise of the poem reaches in these pages an extreme tension; events, we agree, are intelligible, possess an actual inherent intelligibility: but if we impose a concretizing image we kill process . . . and if we adhere to the structure of events we lose a center and operate in terms of fragments."²⁰ Mr. Kenner does not kill process by concretizing his own images. Presumably what he

²⁰ *Motive and Method in The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

means is that if we pay too much attention to the meaning of the individual passages we lose any feeling for the whole poem.

However, if we examine the actual Adams' diary from which Pound has stripped his enigmatic phrases, the conundrum solves itself. The extracts are from the section of the diary that Adams kept on a journey to western Massachusetts and Connecticut during the month of June.²¹

On Friday, the 7th, he noted: "The people in this part of Connecticut make potash and raise a number of colts which they send to the West Indies and barter away for rum, &c." On Saturday he remarked on the beauty of Hartford and Middletown. Monday he wrote: "Took my departure from Middletown homewards the same way I went down; very hot; oated at Hartford and reached Bissell's of Windsor, twenty-three miles, before dinner, just as they had got their Indian pudding and their pork and greens upon the table, one quarter after twelve."

On Thursday, the 13th, he gives a somewhat lengthy account of the political situation in Massachusetts: "One thinks that his [Governor Hutchinson's] character and conduct have been the cause . . . of perpetual struggles of one party for wealth and power at the expense of the liberties of this country, and of perpetual contention in the other party to preserve them, and that this contention will never fully be terminated, but by wars and confusions and carnage." Adams, momentarily depressed by his solitary travellings, concluded his Thursday entry: "I am, for what I can see, quite left alone in the world." The line, "not interested in their servitude", is Pound's own commentary on several paragraphs of Adam's observations.

Pound's 12 lines are, as can be seen by comparing them with the Adams' text, a series of unrelated jottings similar in method to those he made earlier from de Mailla. D. C. Carne-Ross in his balanced contribution to *An Examination of Ezra Pound* writes of the Rapallo years when Pound "was jauntily or furiously versifying history or economics". He goes on: "But Pound has always had the unhappy conviction that anything he has ever read is somehow inherently significant".²² Pound has indeed been a man of vociferous enthusiasms, so carried away by each in turn that he has felt that the heat of his mind can transmute each noted or remembered particle to gold. Dr. Williams, who was first a friend of Pound's when they were students together at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote in retrospect: "Ezra always insisted in the loudest terms on the brilliance and profundity of his mind. He doesn't have a great mind and never did, but that doesn't make him any the less a good poet."²³ It is this insistence, this conviction, that has sustained Pound in patching his Cantos with the oddments of other men's works. Pound had, and within his limits still has, an extraordinary gift for words, but *The Cantos* is the barren reef on which he has stranded his poetic talents.

²¹ *The Works of John Adams*, Vol II (Little, Brown, 1850), pp. 271-279.

²² *op. cit.*, pp. 145-147.

²³ *op. cit.*

Perhaps most representative of *The Cantos* are the Pisan Cantos, for in them one can best evaluate both Pound and his work. With their publication in the United States and the subsequent personal attack on Pound they became an unfortunate emotional issue. Pound was judged politically rather than as a poet. For a man who had extolled Mussolini in his earlier Cantos and apotheosized him in the Pisan ones, who had dated his writings by the years of the Fascist régime and who had looked forward to an Axis victory, this was no less than might have been expected.

Yet Pound was more a corporative fellow-traveller than a Fascist. As his thinking on economic matters became increasingly obsessive he tended to equate Mussolini's government with his own views on money and credit, feeling that the latter's system came closer than any other to abolishing usury as Pound conceived it. When the Italian State which he had backed disintegrated under the weight of the Allied advance Pound acted with dignity. Instead of trying to escape to some neutral country while he still could, he made his way to the American lines and surrendered voluntarily.

He wrote the 11 Pisan Cantos in the detention camp at Pisa before being returned to the United States. Deprived of books and references, his mind was thrown back on itself. So these Cantos are free of much of the arid and overweighted pedantry of the middle ones, and they come closest to being Pound in action, the man as he is.

In method the Pisan Cantos are a continuation of the earlier ones. There is the same elliptical imagism. The themes are the same—brief glimpses of classical landscapes, the renaissance, usury, the Chinese ideogram and so on, all cross-hatched by scraps of foreign words and phrases. One encounters again the puerile contemporary lingo that Pound uses so much in his letters. However, there is a much larger proportion of private recollection, with memories of London and Paris, and references to friends of the days before the First World War like Yeats, Joyce, Ford, Binyon and Wyndham Lewis:

Lordly men are to the earth o'ergiven
these the companions:

Fordie that wrote of giants
and William who dreamed of nobility
and Jim the comedian singing:
"Blarrney castle me darlin'

you're nothing now but a stOWne"

(Canto LXXXIV)

The two innovations of the Pisan Cantos are the emergence of a direct personal note and the intrusion of the immediate present. For the first time one is aware of Pound the individual, the prisoner in his army tent looking at the jeeps and staff cars beyond the barbed wire, listening to the beating of the rain on the canvas or watching the cold glitter of Arcturus in the evening through the smoke hole:

In the drenched tent there is quiet
seared eyes at rest

He concludes Canto LXXXIII with the same word, as if he were
yearning back towards the sleep of childhood:

Down, Derry-down/
Oh let an old man rest

It is the underlying note of *The Pisan Cantos*. Pound's particles that were to form a Gestalt figure in the reader's mind, do nothing of the sort. One does though form a picture of a tired old man who has come to the end of his journey and who sits in the sunlight by an open tent-flap letting his thoughts and his memories drift past.

As the thoughts come to him he writes them down. Then from time to time he breaks off to describe what he sees in front of him when he raises his eyes—the Italian landscape beyond the barbed wire with mountains in the distance, Negro soldiers going over an obstacle course, a wasp building its mud house, a green lizard stalking a fly. Pound makes no transition between this immediacy and the meanderings of his mind in the past. The division is seldom clear, and much of the subject matter is too personal to be grasped, but occasionally Pound's conceptions are charming, as when he sees the electric wires along the road as a staff and the birds perched on them as musical notes.

Even more apparent in the *Pisan Cantos* than elsewhere is Pound's gross lack of judgement. One is embarrassed rather than offended by the mind that can describe Churchill as "the sputtering tank of nicotine and stale whiskey", or that would write the thin parody of

Oh to be in England now that Winston's out
Now that there's room for doubt
And the bank may be the nation's
And the long years of patience
And labour's vacillations

May have let the bacon come home,

or such doggerel as

When a dog is tall but
not so tall as all that
that dog is a Talbot.

The crudeness of

from their seats the blond bastards, and cast 'em
the yid is a stimulant, and the goyim are cattle . . .

makes one uncomfortable merely for the writer of the lines.

In a related way Pound's opening deification of Mussolini reveals the deterioration of his reasoning powers:

The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent shoulders
Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed
Thus Ben and la Clara a *Milano*
by the heels at Milano
That maggots shd/ eat the dead bullock
DIGENES, δῖγενες where the twice crucified
where in history will you find it?

Pound in defeat behaved personally with courage. But when he compares the poltroon's end of the raddled ex-dictator to the death of a god he merely shows himself out of touch with reality.

Sometimes Pound himself seems to become aware of his own dilemma, and in a lyric passage in Canto LXXXI that is perhaps the most moving one in all the Cantos it is as if he saw himself for one clear moment stripped bare:

The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
 Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
 Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
 Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
 Learn of the green world what can be they place
 In scaled invention or true artistry,
 Pull down thy vanity,

Paquin pull down!

"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"

Pull down thy vanity
 Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
 A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
 Half black half white
 Nor knows 'ou wing from tail
 Pull down thy vanity

How mean they hates

Fostered in falsity,

Pull down thy vanity

Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity

Pull down thy vanity,

I say pull down.

It is no matter that this is followed by a limping apologia.

The Pisan Cantos end inconsequentially with Canto LXXXIV. During Pound's incarceration at St. Elizabeth he has devoted himself for the most part to translations from the Chinese. These may well be his most durable achievements. In making them he relied on the earlier version of James Legge. Legge's *Chinese Classics* volumes are written in a stilted though exact Victorian prose, and where Pound versifies from them he often reaches a high level of poetic achievement. But when he attempts to translate on his own, his lack of scholarship is all too apparent. For the fact is that Pound, for all his manipulation of the ideogram, is incapable of translating even a simple Chinese text. His rendering of the *Confucian Classic Anthology*—in spite of certain colloquial lapses—is an example of how much he is able to accomplish when he operates within his own limits. It is a livelier and more poetic version than Arthur Waley's. But Waley does know Chinese, and Pound does not.

Pound has also continued to work intermittently on his Cantos. In 1956, eight years after *The Pisan Cantos*, an additional group of 11 was published with the title of *Section: Rock-Drill 85-95 de los cantares*. There is no indication that these Cantos were written in the public ward of a mental hospital, nothing of the Reading gaol quality about them. In contrast to the Pisan Cantos he has suppressed the personal note.

According to Pound, with these Rock-Drill Cantos his opus has now progressed into the realm of the "permanent" through "the casual" and "the recurrent" to "values that endure like the sea". Actually he has resumed the manner of the middle Cantos in a still more

fragmentary form. For the most part the new Cantos consist of bloodless abbreviations devoid of emotion or coherence and with only the occasional fugitive lyric line that has somehow flourished like stonecrop on a pile of shale.

The Cantos are well named. They exhibit Pound's familiar formula, the preoccupation of the moment elevated to a dogma. Cantos 85 and 86 were written while Pound was translating the Odes of Confucius. As a reflection of this the ideogram becomes even more evident than in the Chinese middle Cantos. In some places it emphasizes its benediction to the point that it threatens to exorcise English from the text. One page of Canto 85 is so dominated by Chinese characters that it contains only a dozen English words. Both Cantos are made up essentially of ideograms and straggling verse commentaries that follow, like the after-image in Pound's mind when he contemplates a given set of hieroglyphics in his dictionary:

tchoung
in rites not flame-headed
"Up to then, I just hadn't caught on.
 chung
 wang
 hsien

Canto 87 begins with a few truncated lines on usury:

. . . between the usurer and any man who
 wants to do a good job
 (perenne
without regard for production—
 a charge
for the use of money or credit.

Pound's judgement of history is still what it was when he dated his writings by the Fascist régime. But there is neither poetry nor thought in:

the total dirt that was Roosevelt
and the farce that was Churchill
 (vide Grenfell re/phoney war)

One finds a diminution in the use of Greek in this Canto as compared to the previous two, and the emergence of scraps of Sophoclean Greek. This is explainable by another of Pound's shifts of interest. At the time of writing Canto 87 he had finished with the Odes of Confucius and had begun a re-working of the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles. In his resumption of Greek studies he was much influenced by F. R. Earp whom he now proclaimed with typical dogmatic assertion to be "the only man who knows anything about Greek". As might be expected Pound found that the *Trachiniae* "presents the highest peak of Greek sensibility registered in any of the plays that have come down to us . . ." ²⁴

Pound's *The Women of Trachis*, however, breaks down in its colloquial attempt to convey the slow moving dignity of Sophoclean

²⁴ *Hudson Review*, Vol. VI, No. 4, Winter, 1954.

tragedy. His translation is an unfortunate mixture of out-dated British-American slang and archaic English, an example of his fundamental lack of balance, a caricature of the original.

Canto 87 dissolves with a brief oblique reference to Pound himself:

Old crocks to die in bug-house:

Gallagher (Patrick) mentioned London loans to Tibet
an old colonel turned against masonry.

And as to what old T. F. saw in the treasury . . .

probably nothing.

Tigers mourn Sikandar

In Cantos 88 and 89 Pound returns to his interlinear versifications of American history, this time using as a source "Old Bullion" Benton's *Thirty Years View*.²⁵ Benton's book deals with the political debates of the period, his speeches in the Senate, his views on his contemporaries, the private papers of General Jackson for whom he was administration floor leader, etc. The *Thirty Years View* is to these Cantos what the Adams' diaries were to the earlier ones. In Benton Pound has discovered a new hero. In Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States which Andrew Jackson with Benton's help finally destroyed, he has found a villain to replace Alexander Hamilton, as in Canto 88:

Andy vetoed the Maysville Road bill . . .

Unconvertible paper

minus now yielding . . .

Prospectus, as Peru, now $\frac{1}{2}$ million per annum

and what is still better, have exports

Geryon's prize pup, Nicholas Biddle.

Just as before, Pound continues to inject tags of his private thoughts into the context, although the Chinese ideogram has faded. There is really nothing to be said for these Cantos, except that they lack even novelty. They might have been transferred without notice into the American history bloc of Pound's middle Cantos. Pound's one innovation is the insertion of the four card symbols at the end of Canto 88—diamonds, hearts, clubs and spades.

Cantos 90 and 91 again present brief glimpses of a classical landscape, glimpses of fugitive charm that dissolve shortly in a sea of non-sequiturs:

the viper stirs in the dust,

the blue serpent

glides from the rock pool

And they take lights now down to the water

the lamps float from the rowers

the sea's claw drawing them outward.

"De fondo" said Juan Ramon

like a mermaid, upward

and to Castalia,

water jets from the rock

and in the flat pool as Arethusa's

a hush in papyri.

²⁵ Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years View; or a History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820-1850*. (New York, 1854-1856).

Canto 91 commences with mediaeval musical notations, Canto 93 with a row of Egyptian hieroglyphics that from then on reappear casually in the text suggesting that Pound had got hold of Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*. Distractibility is more and more apparent. Themes emerge and sink, old themes and new, following the shifting of Pound's wayward mind:

Dant' had it,
Some sense of civility
& from Avignon (whence they do not suspect it)
As in "dragons' spleens",
or "a pelting farm"
Liquidity from the alum at Tolfa
—Papal, that was.
And the Medici failed
from accepting excess deposits
"Te voilà, mon Bourrienne."

or as later on in the same Canto:

All ov which may be a little slow for the reader
or seem platitudinous
und kein Weekend-Spass
Mr. Hoeppli sent a small brochure to Switzerland
and his banker friend replied "urgente";
"destroy it e farlo sparire."
Shivers has received (again) nomination
and "Alfalfa" is no longer in Who's Who,
current issue.

Even in his claimed Paradiso he cannot resist italicizing his obsessive hates:

*Democracies electing their sewage
till there is no clear thought about holiness
a dung flow from 1913
and, in this, their kikery functioned, Marx, Freud
and the American beaneries
Filth under filth,
Maritain, Hutchins,
or as Benda remarked: La trahison"*

though in fact Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* would have been more applicable to Pound than to his enemies.

Considered as a whole the Rock-Drill Cantos are little more than a juggling of Poundian references. They conclude inconclusively with the shipwreck from Book V of the *Odyssey*. Yet a half-dozen lines, taken directly from the Greek (with Divus apparently forgotten now) do demonstrate for a flashing moment among the flotsam and jetsam Pound's submerged poetic talent:

I suppose St. Hilary looked at an oak-leaf.
(vine-leaf? San Denys,
spelled dionisio)
Dionisio et Eleutherio
Dionisio et Eleuthrio
"the brace of 'em
that Calvin never blacked out
en l'Isle.)

That the wave crashed, whirling the raft, then
tearing the oar from his hand,

And he was drawn down under wave,
The wind tossing,

Notus, Boreas,
as it were thistle-down.

Then Leucothea had pity,
"mortal once

Who is now a sea-god:
νόστου . . .

γαῖης Φαιηκῶν,

Following the publication of the Rock-Drill Cantos two more have appeared in magazine form.²⁶ Pound while at St. Elizabeth had the facilities of the Library of Congress available to him to pursue his bibliomantic fancies. His Canto 96 consists for the most part of extracts from and comments on Migne's *Patrology*. This vast collection of the writings of the Greek and Roman church fathers runs to 379 volumes, and is by far the most massive quarry that Pound has set out to exploit.²⁷ One might have thought that he had enough matter here for the rest of his versifying days, but in Canto 97 he turns his back on Migne to "deal with different rates of exchange between gold and silver, as in imperial Rome and the Orient"—as he himself explains in a note. Canto 97, with the interpolation of a few ideograms, is a shorthand paraphrase trailing into incoherence of Alexander Del Mar's *Money and Civilization*.²⁸ Del Mar, a forgotten American economist, is now placed in the Poundian pantheon as no doubt one of the greatest exponents of monetary theory who ever lived. Pound's jottings from Del Mar follow the latter's book in sequence if not in logic:

after the 27/75 Spew Deal wangle
one billion and whatso dinars, Gothic 8
barleycorn, habbeh, tussuj, danik, one mithcal
Shafy and Hanbal both say 12 to 1, etc.

With these Cantos the poem has reached a static equilibrium where verbal matter can be turned out indefinitely as more volumes are added to the hopper. What was to have concluded a fugal structure with its hundredth Canto now seems to have assumed the characteristics and possibilities of Tennyson's brook.

According to Pound's more intimate critics *The Cantos* is his *Divine Comedy*. The verse-barrens of the middle Cantos marked the Purgatory, and with the Pisan Cantos the poet approaches his own heavenly vision. "What is going on in the Pisan Cantos is no longer survey (Inferno-Purgatorio) but affirmation (Paradiso)" Mr. Kenner writes.²⁹ Mr. Davenport, who has had the opportunity of talking the matter

²⁶ *Hudson Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Summer, 1956, and Vol. IX, No. 3, Autumn, 1956.

²⁷ Jacques Paul Migne: *Patrologiae Latinae*, 217 vols. (Paris 1844-1855). *Patrologia Graeca*, 162 vols. (Paris 1856-1866).

²⁸ *Money and Civilization. A History of the Precious Metals from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London, 1880).

²⁹ *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

over with Pound, explains that "the Pisan Cantos represent the *Paradiso* or the beginning of the *Paradiso* of the poem, depending on whether the last section be written. Its title not yet made public, indicates a final statement of dogma. 'My *Paradiso*', Pound says 'will have no St. Dominic or Augustine, but it will be a *Paradiso* just the same, moving toward final coherence.'" ³⁰

"In the heaven which receives most of His light I have been, and have seen things which he who descends from thereabove neither knows nor has power to recount." ³¹ So Dante wrote at the beginning of his *Paradise*. It is a strange successor *Paradise* that begins, as does Pound's, with a paean to the dead Mussolini and continues with the old bravado:

"Not a right but a duty"
 those words still stand uncanceled,
 "Presente!
 and merrda for the monopolists
 the bastardly lot of 'em
 Put down the slave trade, made the desert to yield
 and menaced the loan swine

Despite Pound's approach to *Paradise* he has not changed his earlier tune:

Lodge, Knoz against world entanglement
 Two with him in the whole house against the constriction of Bacchus
 moved to repeal that god-damned amendment
 Number XVIII
 Mr. Tinkham
 Geneva the usurers' dunghill
 Frogs, brits, with a few Dutch pimps
 as top dressing to preface extortions
 and the usual filthiness . . .
 and Churchill's return to Midas broadcast by his liary.

Nor in the following more or less typical section of a Rock-Drill Canto does the light illuminate:

The nomignolo not reflecting on character
 but at that time, 1900 or thereabouts
 applied to all professors of chemistry.
 And they count on the amount of coherence,
 the amount of endurance,
 durations,
 Henry's remark on "dissolving view"
 Should be registered,
 Chiefs' names on a monument,
 Seepage
 the elan, the block dissolutions (Canto 87)

As has been noted, Pound's first fancy was to write his *Sordello*. Then as the Cantos developed he began to view them as a contrapuntal epic, so he told Yeats, with "no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic

³⁰ *Motive and Method in The Cantos of Ezra Pound, op. cit.*, p. 52

³¹ *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Charles Eliot Norton (Houghton Mifflin, 1902).

of discourse, but two themes, the descent in Hades from Homer, a Metamorphosis from Ovid, and mixed with these mediaeval or modern historical characters^{29, 32} Pound himself was a kind of literary Ulysses voyaging through the pages. The Chinese influences have not yet got to work. Forrest Read, in his contribution to *Motive and Method*, echoes this earlier point of view.³³

Dante, when he began *The Divine Comedy*, had the outlines of his Paradise already fixed in his mind. Pound could have had no such outline because his self-styled Paradise is based on fortuitous circumstances. The internment camp was an accident in Pound's career, in no way to be foreseen during those inter-war years when he busied himself with his selected books and documents at Rapallo. The Pisan Cantos could have formed no part of any original plan, and the fact that Pound in his Rock-Drill and subsequent Cantos has recurred to the arid manner of his middle Cantos is proof that they were only an interlude, and that whatever flesh and blood quality they possess is extrinsic. To consider the Pisan Cantos as the Paradise of a *Divine Comedy* is as incongruous as to imagine Dante breaking off his vision of the Light to make a journey to the land of the Cimmerians. According to Mr. Kenner Pound's internment camp becomes the modern world. He does not explain how it is at the same time paradise. Pound's Paradise is no resolution, as was Dante's, but an afterthought, a mere name, without poetic application.

As a conundrum or academic occupation *The Cantos* will continue to appeal to the self-hypnotized.³⁴ The process of elucidation can be endless—if one does not ask the end. Years ago Yeats, who was a friend of Pound's and who had himself a weakness for the obscure, described the earlier Cantos as "works of a heroic sincerity, the man, his active faculties in suspense, one finger beating time to a bell sounding and echoing in the depths of his own mind."³⁵ But what if there is a basic flaw in the bell casting?

For Mr. Kenner the Cantos are "the poetry of future generations." Yet to suppose this would be to retire poetry once and for all to the unheeded isolation of the libraries. The alienation of the reader that began with the symbolists would then be complete.

³² *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (The Cuala Press, 1928), p. 2.

³³ *op. cit.*, See p. 103. "The narrator is Ezra Pound as Odysseus, and his Cantos relate the education of Ezra Pound, the modern man, as Homer's poem relates the education of Odysseus."

³⁴ As an example of critical glossolaly, see Brian Soper's essay, *Ezra Pound: Some Notes on his Philosophy*, in *An Examination of Ezra Pound*, *op. cit.*, p. 246. "The linear movement of history is a foreign concept to Pound. He is concerned, not with the transient attachments of strict temporality, but with projects tending always to logo-grammatical expression, for the re-vision of history in terms of permanently valid patterns, lucid, economical, self-coherent, existing within a temporal matrix, but not subject, except within the limits imposed by the immediate context of the situation, to the 'normal conditions of historical time'."

³⁵ *Essays, 1931 to 1936* (The Cuala Press, 1937), p. 40.

As Wordsworth remarked in his *Preface*, poets do not write for other poets alone, but for men. When they write for themselves or for a closed circle the result is pseudopoesy—and men turn away. This brings us to the fundamental question of what poetry is. Stripped of all adventitious accretions of rhyme and meter, it is a concentration of emotion; as Coleridge defined it, "the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at". It is sharing of experience between the poet and the reader in which the latter finds an understanding of himself of which he was not previously aware. But to be read poetry must be readable. When the reader is cut off, because of a defect in the poet, he loses faith in poetry.³⁶ Pound himself notes accurately in *How to Read* that "one moves the reader only by clarity". He goes on: "In depicting the motions of the 'human heart' the durability of the writing depends on the exactitude. It is the thing that is true that keeps fresh for the new reader"³⁷

Such observations come curiously from the author of *The Cantos*. This bulk poem, finally considered, is like a kaleidoscope made up of all kinds and shapes of glass of varying degrees of colour and brilliance, but lacking the reflecting mirrors necessary to organize them into a pattern. Pound has disclaimed furnishing such mirrors, maintaining that they must be supplied by the reader. But the mirrors which are supposed to exist in the eye of the beholder are in the last analysis non-existent. The pieces for all their mass and variety remain only fragments.

³⁶ "It is interesting to note that mentalities to which the usual and ordinary man is not capable of approximating without loss can almost always be shown to be defective, and that the defects themselves are the barriers to approximation. . . . However admirable the experiences of a Boehme or a Blake, of a Nietzsche or of the Apocalypst, the features which prevent general participation in it, the barriers to communication, are not the features upon which its value chiefly depends. It is the inchoate part of Blake's personality which makes him incomprehensible, not the parts which were better organized than those of everyone else." I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (Harcourt, Brace, 1926), p. 195.

³⁷ *Polite Essays* (Faber & Faber, 1937), p. 165.

Material and Documents

AGAINST FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS

1. Clouds over the Oases.

In the last few years a concerted effort has been made to reinforce the concept of the Sahara—that vast, variegated region—as a bleak desert, as unpopulated as the moon. The object of this sustained propaganda campaign became apparent about the end of last year. Articles began to appear in various publications describing in as bright a style as an account of a *grande couturière* dress show the military installations at Colomb-Bechar and Beni Abbes, where an area of some 800 kilometers has been set aside as a robot-plane and teleguided-missile base. Finally it was announced in April that the first French A-bomb would be exploded experimentally at El Hammoudia “in the Tanezrouft”. How convenient to have a desert available in which to send off such lovely fireworks!

Unfortunately, the desert is not uninhabited, and El Hammoudia is set not in the bleak tanezrouft, but at the southern end of Touat, which is the middle point of a great arc of valleys between Morocco and Mزاب, one of the most fertile oasis regions of the Sahara. On both sides of these valleys, the Gourara, Touat and Tidikelt, are palm groves, kaabas and ancient monasteries. To the east it is watered by streams flowing from the Tademait, to the south by streams from the outlying peaks of the Hoggar and the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Subterranean rivers also bring water from the Ksour mountain chain.

Thanks to the copious irrigation, there are 200 kilometers of practically continuous palm groves, with 17,000 inhabitants and 75 villages in the Touat alone. This region was the historic halting spot for the Sudan caravans, which once were the only medium of trade and cultural communication between the Maghreb and Black Africa. In this so-called date-highway are some 2,000,000 magnificent trees bearing 200,000 hundredweight of dates. A Frenchman of my acquaintance owns 130,000 date palms in the Raggan. He cannot feel very happy at the sight of the launching pylons, standing in readiness for the famous bomb.

Apart from the dates, there is barley, tobacco, henna, pimento and vegetable cultivation, as well as pasturage for camels, sheep and goats. The prosperity of these oases is due not only to their unique position in the hollow of a huge basin, watered each spring by great torrents from the Moroccan Atlas Mountains and the Tademait, which afterwards vanish beneath the sand; for centuries past, generations of peasants have planted these palm groves and cultivated them, irrigating them at the cost of tremendous labour, toiling with pick and basket, working like ants in the subterranean *foggaras* which,

the geographer E. F. Gautier tells us, are almost as complicated as the underground railway system of a great capital city.

In the geographical system of the Touat, Gouarra and Tidikelt live 200,000 Arabs, Berbers, Jews and Negroes whose means of livelihood are agriculture, basketwork, weaving and trading by camel between the Sudan and the Maghreb. About 60 of their villages, called *ksours*, lie in the Gouran, 75 in the Touat and 40 in the Tidikelt, many of them have Chorfa or Kounta mosques, for since generations these settlements have been religious and cultural centres. Defended by walled fortifications, the villages protected the oasis from marauding tribes from the desert.

History recounts that the oases belonged to the Taflelt and to the Moroccan empires in turn; at intervals they achieved independence, then again came under the power of Saharan tribes. In 1900 the Flamand scientific mission was attacked by nomadic bandits, and this gave the French a pretext to seize the oases and the Zousfana and Ghir territories, which were actually part of Morocco. England's attention being otherwise engaged, she raised no objection to this violation of the frontier fixed by a Franco-English treaty signed in 1890. In 1902 the Sultan was obliged to acknowledge the *fait accompli*; the oases became part of Algeria.

Still, one may be permitted a feeling of astonishment that the atomic experiments are to take place in this green belt which, we are told by M. Augustin Bernard of the Académie des Sciences, is unique in the whole Sahara. We have learned something of the effects of Strontium 90 on sheep in Wales, which was infinitely farther from the scene of atomic explosions than are these oases from El Hammodia. The natural food of the Saharan people—milk, cereals and dates—will at once be contaminated by radioactive fall-out, which no doubt will be carried from well to well by the subterranean waterways. The wind, blowing generally from the north-east, will carry off the contaminated sand, to let it fall like a death-bearing rain on Mauretania. And in Mauretania live not only the defenceless Saharans, whom some may choose to disregard, but also *French* oil and mineral prospectors; and there are the French mines of Tindouf and Fort-Gouraud. We know that the wind has carried great sand dunes from Africa to the Canaries. It would be foolish to consider metropolitan France immune, for when the north-east wind subsides, the south wind will take its place and very possibly carry the red dust over the Mediterranean.

All these facts are recognised. Yet the Sahara experts have issued not one word of warning, nor has support been given to the few scattered protests. Whatever the consequences, we French want our bomb. Prestige is involved, it seems, and the nation has been told sternly that it must live in the present. Must it also die in the present, cynicism and false reasoning having brought us to accept a policy that may well lead to self-destruction?

Odette de Puigauveau.
Adapted by Ira Morris.

2. Africa says No to French Tests

AFRICA, especially the West, East and Central parts, were the scene of the most brutal and barbaric exploit of Western civilization—the slave trade. For about 400 years millions of our people were kidnapped, captured in internecine wars and sold into servitude to help provide the raw materials for the maintenance of European civilization.

The end of this savagery, in the second quarter of the last century, witnessed the birth of yet further unbridled exploitation of our peoples and land. Thus, those who escaped the woes and misery of the plantations in the New World became exposed to the exploits of colonialism and imperialism—again our share of European civilization.

For many years our lot has been humiliation and degradation, and now that our people are looking at the shining example of the nine independent African States, waiting, fighting and struggling for their chance to govern themselves, with the forces of imperialism on the run, *the most atrocious of all enemies is creeping into our continent*—THE H-BOMB.

We are horrified that the French should dare to try and impose on us the same fate and sufferings as the Japanese people. *The centuries of slavery and imperial exploitation are to be followed by the destruction of the lives of our people through the pollution of our air with radioactive fall-out from the impending French nuclear explosions.* It is outrageous that the French greed for power and glory can only be satisfied by the destruction of our people.

The entire African Continent has said NO to this nuclear madness. If we have urged you before, in all sincerity we urge you NOW to join with us in our efforts to force the French Government and political parties to immediately abandon their plans for H-Bomb tests in the Sahara.

If Governments remain silent, we appeal to all peace-loving people of the world, especially the British, French, American and Soviet people, to SPEAK AGAINST THIS INSANITY meant to sabotage the hopes for world peace as seen by the present trend in international affairs.

*(Committee of African Organisations,
200, Gower Street, London, N.W.1.)*

3. A Petition to President Charles de Gaulle

The French Government has announced its intention to explode an atomic bomb in the southern section of Algeria, the Sahara, this fall. The people of North and West Africa view this event with horror. Africans do not accept the reassuring statements of the French atomic experts who are more concerned with the "glory"

of France than with the health and safety of the Africans on whose soil they plan their demonic experiments. Africans are aware that sudden, unpredictable shifts in the prevailing winds may bring radioactive fallout to populated areas, as occurred during the Nevada tests. Africans do not want the air they breathe, the water they drink and the food they eat contaminated with radioactive particles. Africans do not wish to add cancer and genetic damage to the problems that face them now. **WE DEMAND NOTHING LESS THAN AN END TO ALL PLANS OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO EXPLODE ATOMIC BOMBS IN THE SAHARA!**

We ask all persons who sympathize with our efforts to sign and circulate this petition. Urge your organization to make a public statement of protest and send to:

FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL, 934, Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Circulated by the

NIGERIAN STUDENTS UNION, 630, West 135th St., N.Y. 31.

*

4. *The following statement by the leading organization in the United States protesting nuclear tests was issued during the debate in the United Nations on the French Sahara tests and sent to French ambassador Moch, American ambassador Lodge and the New York Times.*

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A SANE NUCLEAR POLICY, INC.

17, East 45th Street, Room 401, New York 17, N.Y.

The interests of this Committee with regard to the projected French tests lie mainly in the fact that such a step at the time when the current nuclear powers are meeting and progressing toward a treaty to end and control tests is the height of international irresponsibility, and will redound more to the disadvantage of the French than to their benefit. However, since it appears that the French may try to justify their actions by minimizing the scientific facts, we have made the following brief analysis of the purported French position as it appeared in the *New York Times* of 1st November, 1959. A more detailed treatment or documentation of any item will gladly be supplied by the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

"The first French explosion, it is contended, will increase the existing world level of natural and artificial radiation by a maximum of two one-thousandths of a milliroentgen on a present level of about 150 milliroentgens."

Comment

Note the use of the phrase "world level", and the inclusion of "artificial" radiation. Both these usages allow creation of a false impression. What the bomb blast will do to world averages is really not the point. Fallout is not uniformly introduced into the earth's

atmosphere, it is not uniformly distributed, and it does not fall to earth in a uniform way. To pretend that the French blast will contribute as much fallout to Australia or the Cape of Good Hope as it will to, say, Morocco or to the Mediterranean area is nonsense.

And secondly, the lumping of *artificial* radiation in with natural sources is solely for the purpose of confusing the issue. It is true that individuals, for diagnostic reasons, may decide to undergo X-ray treatment or X-ray examination for serious ills. In these cases, the benefit is balanced against the damage. But to take these high rates of radiation for medical purposes and to include them in world averages is to give the impression that all the world's peoples, normally and involuntarily, receive medical X-rays, which is a travesty on the truth. By the inclusion of these extraneous figures, the French minimize the effect additional bomb blasts will have on the natural radiation to which the human race is subject.

"The French report declares that after more than 200 nuclear explosions under British, Soviet and United States control, the total radioactivity of the atmosphere has increased by only 3.4 per cent. A French explosion at Reggan in the central Sahara would add only infinitesimally to this total. . . ."

Comment

The amount that radioactivity has increased in the *atmosphere* is not particularly significant and is misleading. The amount of radioactive debris that may be in the atmosphere at any one time may be low. The significant thing is how much fission material has been blasted into the sky since testing began, and how much is on the ground. And again, the average increase to the world's atmosphere gives no indication of what may be confidently expected to happen where heavy and concentrated fallout occurs.

"The tolerance level for most sensitive individuals is generally put at 500 milliroentgens a year and there is no danger for normal adults at ten times that level, according to the report."

Comment

It is generally agreed that any increase in radiation, no matter how small, represents an increase in human suffering genetically, and perhaps also somatically. This was indicated by the U.N. report. Therefore, a flat statement that there is *no danger* from a small increase in radiation is false. It is also important to point out that while the *average* damage may be low, it has no real meaning, since some persons will show severe damage, and others none at all. There is no "*tolerance level*" for damage from radiation. Geneticists are agreed that radiation does damage at any level. With regard to somatic effects, the latest information shows that the incidence of leukemia was proportional *even to the lowest levels* to the distance that people in Hiroshima stood from the bomb blasts.

"Assuming the level of radioactivity in the cloud at an arbitrary index figure of 1,000 one hour after the explosion, this would be down to 100 after seven hours, to one in two weeks and to one-tenth in three months through the normal deterioration of radioactivity."

Comment

This statement means that fission products from nuclear explosions *for the most part* decay rapidly, which is true. Unfortunately, it is not true of Strontium-90 with a half-life of 28 years, or of Cesium-137. Shorter-lived isotopes such as Iodine-131 and Strontium-89 are also showing up in human beings.

Radioactive clouds from American tests moved in unpredictable ways and dumped heavy radioactivity hundreds and even several thousands of miles from the test area. One of the most notable of these was the blast "diablo" which caused heavy fallout in North Dakota, bringing the strontium count in milk to serious levels there.

Increase of radioactivity from Nevada test blasts in the U.S. has not been "negligible". In many instances it has been serious. Over 10,000 individuals had, in 1957, received an average of eight roentgens from the Nevada tests, and some individuals received as much as 29 roentgens. Vegetables in the New Mexico area, wheat in the Minnesota region, milk in the Dakotas and St. Louis, Mo. have all shown considerable contamination, much of it above the so-called "permissible" levels. It is true that this information is not general knowledge, but it is readily verifiable.

"All the major African population centers are almost twice as far away from the proposed French test site as are San Francisco and Los Angeles from the Nevada proving ground. . . ."

Comment

Does this have any significance? Note the use of the phrase "major population centers". This seems to cover up the fact that there are large numbers of people not in major centers as was true in the United States as well. And the fact that Minnesota is a thousand miles or more from Nevada provided no protection to this State.

From the general tenor of the French release, it can be deduced that the burst will be a surface explosion of around 20,000 tons of T.N.T. equivalent. There have been no changes in the nature of nuclear explosions, so we may confidently expect that there will be heavy local fallout in the downwind direction for 200 miles or more, providing radiation in the range of 1 to 4 roentgens per hour. We expect that the winds aloft will carry radioactive clouds in many unpredictable directions and that heavy fallout will occur in areas which cannot be determined ahead of time.

We can expect that the amount of fallout, whether it traveled hundreds or thousands of miles, how much damage it did to date

crops, milk and water supplies, forage, animals and people, will only be determined in the months and years after the explosion takes place.

✽

The following comment on this statement was sent to the executive director of the New York SANE Committee.

I should like to present my opinion of the mimeographed statement of the National Committee on the French tests and urge that N.Y. Committee act on the issue with a strong demand that the French government call off the tests.

If the statement had begun with the sentence, "... since it appears that the French may try to justify their actions by minimizing the scientific facts", etc., and simply proceeded to demonstrate the radiation hazard to the Africans in the surrounding area, it would have been a model *informational* statement. However, SANE is a political action group devoted to ending the tests. From this viewpoint the statement is an absolute failure because it nowhere demands that the *French call off its test*. One may claim that this demand is implicit in the scientific material presented that the people in the area will receive a certain amount of radioactive fallout. However, we are all too familiar with numerous scientists who will admit the dangers but insist that the tests are needed for whatever reasons. A clear statement that the committee holds the dangers to the inhabitants above France's mimicking the other nuclear powers is absolutely essential in a *protest* statement.

The above applies if the statement had begun with the second line. Unfortunately, it began with the first line which announces for all the world (or at least the *N.Y. Times*), Africans included, that "the interests of this Committee with regard to the French tests lie *mainly* [my emphasis] in the fact that such a step at the time when the current nuclear powers are meeting and progressing toward a treaty to end and control tests is the height of international irresponsibility. . . ." In short if the current nuclear powers were not sitting in Geneva the National Committee would lose its *main* reason for protesting the French tests. Despite all the scientific lip-service paid to the harm to Africans, SANE's main concern is The Treaty which it supposes will be more sacrosanct than past international treaties. The National Committee is so enamoured in ending the tests by The Treaty that it cannot bring itself to address a protest to a head of government, in this case, Charles De Gaulle, and demand that the tests be called off—even when this action is considered to threaten the achievement of The Treaty. Instead, the statement was sent to Lodge and Moch at the U.N. who, of course, need SANE's opinion for the debate.

If the New York Committee takes more responsibility for "its good name" and has the courage, it should issue a simple direct protest to the French government. The statement I sent you in September is still available.

Mina Grossman

Correspondence :
Kazuo Suzuki

LETTER FROM JAPAN

Repatriation of the Korean residents of Japan is an issue which has stirred up this country recently and points up the political factors hampering solution of this as well as most other refugee problems. The Koreans in Japan are one of the numerous lingering pockets of refugees and displaced persons scattered throughout the world that were thrown up in the wake of the 20th century's destructive wars and social chaos.

In line with the fundamental principal of *voluntary* repatriation of refugees to the country of their choice, even a communist country, the Kishi government early this year, decided to permit return to North Korea of those residents in Japan who wished to go. This decision drew a violent denunciation from that honored democrat of the free world, Syngman Rhee, whose pauperized government's prestige assumes more importance than the wishes of the Koreans involved. Rhee threatened to break off Korean-Japanese negotiations on the "Rhee Line", an arbitrary line excluding Japanese fishermen from certain fishing waters, as well as retain 153 captured fishermen as *permanent* hostages. Why South Korea was not the choice of the Koreans who wished to leave Japan will be dealt with presently.

To the legally listed Korean residents of Japan, numbering approximately 600,000 persons, must be added about 200,000 illegal immigrants, according to Judicial Department figures. Almost 95% originally came from what is now South Korea and are the remainder of a colony of 2,500,000 Koreans who were conscripted as laborers and soldiers by the Japanese during the second World War. The original impetus to flee war-torn Japan after the Allied victory was interrupted by disastrous floods and a cholera epidemic in South Korea. Instead of the Koreans becoming fully integrated into the Japanese economy and social structure, social prejudice and their own lacks as workers kept them in marginal and to some extent anti-social positions. Thus, for example, the Korean crime rate for theft, assault, and extortion is five times higher than the rate for Japanese; the unemployment rate is eight times higher; one-third of the population of working age is unemployed or in anti-social occupations (e.g. pin-ball machine operators).

Under such circumstances it is understandable that many Koreans would wish to return to their homeland and it appears that about 100,000 registered for return to North Korea by the end of last year. This occurred despite the presence of agents from the south competing for registrants. Perhaps the most significant reason for the lack of immigrants to South Korea is the high rate of unemployment which now reaches 10 per cent at the same time that there is a labor shortage in the north.

The destruction of Korea's economy began after the second World

War when independence was accompanied by the division of the agricultural south from the mining and power sources of the north. Exceeding the losses inflicted by Japanese imperialism, the Korean war cost the people about 1,000,000 dead civilians and 600,000 destroyed houses. At the same time 4,000,000 refugees from the north fled into South Korea and added to the chaotic condition of the economy. A United Nations economic survey of the Far East considers the disparity between the number of people to be supported and the available economic resources to be more serious in South Korea than in any other part of Asia. Twenty-one million people in the south live in an area of 2,300,000 acres while 9,000,000 in the north live on 3,000,000 acres. In fact, the same Rhee government that is so anxious to lure Koreans from Japan to South Korea has sponsored emigration plans for his surplus population to Brazil, Paraguay (where they can be ruled by dictator Stroesser instead of Rhee) and other South American countries!

One can nevertheless ask, how can it possibly be considered humanitarian, in the words of the Japanese Red Cross, to repatriate people to a communist-dominated country especially since it is well known that the impoverished Koreans in Japan are under the constant pressure of sweet words and promises of "good" jobs from North Korean agents? It is nonsense to claim that *all* the people in the communist countries are slaves just as that *all* people in the western free countries enjoy every freedom. We do not, of course, live by bread alone, but we must acknowledge that there are many people who *need* the bread more than anything else in the free countries. In any case, blaming and criticizing the communist north, e.g., forced labor, planned economy, secret police state, etc., in itself does not prove the economic and political superiority of South Korea under Syngman Rhee.

Few totalitarian States would be found lacking if compared with Syngman Rhee's dictatorship, a few examples of which will follow. On 24th December, 1958, Rhee's ruling Liberal Party forced through the New National Security Law by calling 300 policemen into the hall to bodily evict 80 Opposition legislators who were on a sit-down strike against this law. The Oppositionists labelled this "24" incident as the death certificate of democracy in Korea. Under the fantastic Article 4 of this law, "State secrets are designated as documents, books or the like, facts or information which must be kept from foreign governments and the enemy for protecting national interests and defense in political, economic, social, cultural and military fields." Under Article 2 life imprisonment or the death sentence is prescribed for collectors of national secrets in order to benefit the enemy. The ruling Liberal party also revised the Local Administration Law enabling the government to appoint village heads that were formerly elected. It was applied to the Mayor of Taegu who overwhelmingly defeated the Liberal Party's candidate last year and who was deposed by a handful of Liberal Party assemblymen on 14th May. The National Security Law has already been applied to the second largest newspaper, *Keikyo*, which was ordered to cease publication because it criticized government policy. The *Washington Post* in a strong

editorial on 10th May, wrote, "Syngman Rhee's government is suppressing the political opposition and freedom of speech" and that "American citizens should closely consider whether we are promoting totalitarianism in the Republic of Korea by giving them dollars".¹ An extreme example of Rhee's terrorism occurred on 27th February, when the Supreme Court sentenced to *death* Hogan So (Japanese pronunciation), a leader of the Progressive party and former Agriculture Minister and Vice-chairman of the Korean Diet, on the charge that the platform of his party violated the constitution and that he had formed an illegal association to *attempt* subversion of the State.

Owing to the surprising firmness of the Japanese government, which in this issue had the entire population behind it, with the exception of a small right-wing group, and with the aid of the Japanese Red Cross, the first 5,000 Koreans left for North Korea late in December, 1959.

¹ In fact American financial assistance (International Co-operation Administration Funds) prevents South Korea's economy from totally collapsing. The following figures from "Survey of Economies in Asia and the Far East, 1957" edited by the United Nations proves it.

Expenditure and Income of the Government of Korea in 1957 in billions of Howan.

<i>Expenditures</i>			<i>Income</i>		
Defense	118.5	27.9%	Annual Revenue	163.5	38.5%
Development	189.5	44.7%	Foreign Assistance	194.3	45.8%
Administration	116.4	27.4%	National Loan	37.5	8.8%
			Advance of National Bank	29.1	6.9%
Total	424.4	100. %	Total	424.4	100. %

In addition it should be pointed out that the Republic of Korea must support an army of 700,000 men, the third largest in the free countries.

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